

CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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Editorial

Individual Differences in Children

AN ARTICLE in a recent bulletin of the Child Welfare League of America has as its title *The Present Day Discovers the Mind*. It might be said with equal force that the present day has discovered individual differences and no discovery has been more important for education than has this one.

Theoretically it was relatively easy to regard children in the mass, to regard them as a group who must acquire just so much material at the end of a set period. Actually almost any unselected group of children is composed of individual units different from each other in mental level, in health conditions, in experiences, and in personality. Even in a group selected on the basis of intelligence tests or grades, individual differences in health, in personality, and in special abilities and disabilities still appear. A high level of intelligence does not necessarily imply a good personality, nor does it necessarily imply that a child will be equally good at all things. He may learn to read readily but learn to write with difficulty. He may learn many things easily, but be hampered in his social contacts by undue timidity. A uniform method of approach is as inadequate even in a selected group as it often is with children from the same family.

Parents frequently comment with much puzzlement upon the fact that the discipline and methods of treatment which work well with one of their children are wholly inadequate when used with another. If children reared in the same family show such differences, how much more are these apparent in groups of children even as young as those found in nurseries and kindergartens.

There seem to be certain general principles which apply in the education and training of all children but much of the technic with which these are applied differs with the individual with whom they are used. Some differences, such as a tendency to have fears or temper tantrums or other emotional upsets, unusual timidity, malnutrition, or other poor health conditions and the like are handicaps which it is the duty of the educator to overcome. Other differences in the line of special abilities need to be recognized and utilized, for if this is done the children who possess them are enabled to make greater contributions. Recognizing the differences between children, taking account of these differences, making use of the assets and trying to obviate the liabilities which each child brings to his group,—these things bring into play all of the skill and training which a teacher possesses. They also make teaching one of the most interesting of all professions.

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Teacher Training

WILLIAM C. BAGLEY

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IN DISCUSSING with you some of the vital problems involved in the professional education of teachers, I shall not limit my remarks to the specific field of the teaching service that this association represents. It is true that the successive steps of education which we list as kindergarten, primary, intermediate, junior high school, senior high school, collegiate, and university coincide, at least roughly, with somewhat significant levels of mental development in childhood, youth, and early adulthood. The classification usually leads, however, to an inference that is both unjustified and unfortunate,—the inference, namely, that both the professional and the financial status of the teacher must necessarily bear a direct relation to the age of the pupils taught or the level or stage of development that they represent.

The absurdity of this inference becomes clear enough when we stop to analyze its implications. To say that a first-grade teacher has necessarily a less significant status than a ninth-grade teacher is tantamount to saying that the six-year-old child is less important than the fourteen-year-old child.

Some persons, it is true who recognize the absurdity of such an inference take refuge in another assumption,—namely, that, even if the six-year-old child is just as important as the fourteen-year-old child, the task of teaching him is less difficult, and consequently the first

grade teacher need not be either so highly selected or so well trained as the ninth grade teacher.

This argument, however, will not stand the test of analysis. It had some force when the principal end of good teaching was to keep order in the classroom. Other things equal, it is probable that a poor teacher will have fewer disciplinary difficulties of a gross or violent type with little children than with older children, but this is not because it is any easier to teach the younger pupils, but rather because these pupils have not yet reached the point where they can successfully resist poor teaching.

It was once believed, of course, that the actual teaching process itself was simpler when one dealt with the lower age-levels. This is now generally recognized to be a fallacy. In a very real sense, the more immature the learner, the greater the need for competent guidance. This principle has been markedly confirmed by the recent investigations concerning the possibilities of education among children of preschool age. In the light of the studies of Mrs. Woolley, Dr. Gesell, Dr. Baldwin, and others, we may be very sure that the potential opportunities for stimulating and guiding mental and physical growth in young children have only begun to be understood. What the next decade may bring forth in this field of research and teaching I shall not presume to predict.

There is sufficient evidence now, however, to justify in the kindergarten-primary field much higher standards for the preparation of teachers than have prevailed in the past. The old notion that a teacher's equipment and compensation should be directly proportional to the age and attainments of the pupils and students who are taught is no longer tenable.

In my judgment, the first place at which to strengthen and improve the work of our educational system is in connection with these early years. All informed students of the problem agree that American education in comparison with education in the most advanced European countries is superficial. Many factors contribute to this condition but not the least significant of these, I am sure, is the weakness of our basic work. As long as we regard this basic work as subordinate in significance to the advanced work,—as long as we place a heavy premium upon teaching the older pupils and students,—just so long shall we waste our energies in trying to correct on the upper stories of the educational structure the weaknesses that are inherent in the foundation.

Another shortcoming of our general educational policy in this country is directly related to this problem of raising the standards of preparation for teaching on the lower age-levels. I refer to the emphasis that we have laid upon what may be called the "overhead" personnel of our school system as contrasted with the much lighter emphasis that we have given to those who do the actual first-hand work of the classroom. Although we have failed to make the actual work of teaching an attractive profession, we have succeeded in giving a professional status to what we term "educational leadership."

The method that we have evolved for solving the difficult problem of universal education has at least this to commend it: If we cannot have highly competent teachers for "all the children of all the people" it is certainly well that we can have a well-trained and competent group of "super-teachers" who will guide and direct those who do the actual, first-hand work of the schools. The development of an elaborate educational "overhead" is also quite consistent with the method by means of which our industrial and commercial enterprises have evolved to their present apparently high state of success and efficiency. I suppose that, if we have any well defined national trait, it is our passion for organization.

And yet the policy as applied to education has limitations and dangers which it would be folly to ignore. In business and industry, it may be a matter of no great consequence that the only recognized line of advancement is from the supervised direction of one's own first-hand work to a point where one supervises the work of others. It may be a matter of no consequence that one's pride in fine first-hand workmanship is an asset only as it leads to making one a boss and then a foreman and ultimately perhaps a manager or a superintendent. It may be of small consequence that the worker otherwise disqualified for such advancement tends toward the level of a human automaton, content to put forth only enough efforts to enable him to "get by." The magnification of the administrative, executive, and supervisory functions in business and industry has doubtless been inevitable and has possibly been in the direction of progress in spite of the fact that it has tended to rob individual first-hand effort of its most satisfying and enduring reward and

sanction,—namely, pride and joy in good workmanship.

It is one thing to apply such a standard to business and industry; it may be quite another thing to apply it to education. If I buy an automobile I am not particularly interested, except from a humanitarian point of view, in the workmen who have actually put the machine together. I can be reasonably certain that a few highly competent engineers designed the car, that a few others devised elaborate machinery for making and testing the various parts, and that a competent hierarchy of executives, superintendents, managers, foremen, and bosses formed a responsible overhead for supervising its construction. The factory hands who operated the automatic machinery, screwed up the nuts, clinched the cotterspins, and sprayed on the paint and varnish: these may have been morons or they may have been near-geniuses; they may have had no interest whatsoever in their work beyond their pay-checks or they may have been true craftsmen with fine pride in fine workmanship; they may have been human automata going through their motions with as little real understanding of what it all meant as the machines that they operated, or they may have been men of keen insight, seeing their work in clear relation to the completed product.

To me, merely as a purchaser of an automobile, it would make but little difference. I can trust the machinery of production and testing under the supervision of the overhead. In fact, I am fairly certain that if any one of the factory-hands were a near-genius, and tremendously interested in his work for its own sake, and able to see his work clearly in its relation to the completed

product, he would very quickly be taken from the ranks and promoted to the overhead. So much if I should buy an automobile.

When I send my children to school, however, my attitude toward the person who does the actual, first-hand work of their education is almost completely reversed. It is true that I would like the plans and specifications of that education to be well drawn by highly competent students of the problem. I would like the textbooks to be authoritative and well-written. I would like the tests to be objective and accurate. I would like an organization that would guarantee a healthful school environment. But above all I would wish for my children a real teacher. No virtues of the "overhead" could compensate for a teacher who had no interest in his work, who saw nothing beyond his pay-check, who found no joy and felt no pride in doing his work as well as it could be done irrespective of the material rewards that it brought, who had no vision of what it meant and no understanding of what his efforts contributed to the completed product. No excellencies of the course of study, no expensive luxuries in school buildings or equipment can compensate for bungling work in teaching—and the younger the child the greater the damage that a bungling teacher can do.

I believe that the time is opportune for a frontal attack upon the problem of securing an adequate professional education for prospective teachers especially of the younger children. There is no good reason, for example, for retaining the standard of two years' training beyond high school graduation,—the standard which prevails in most of our states and which applies generally to

kindergarten and elementary school teachers. A minimum of three years' training has already been adopted by two states,—New York and California,—and with quite remarkable results.

I recall distinctly a conference of the normal school principals of New York State that I attended in 1919. The State Department of Education had been considering the possibility of extending the normal school course from two years to three years. The conference was called to secure the judgment of the principals as to the wisdom of the policy. With only one or two exceptions, the principals maintained that such a policy would ruin the schools. The enrolment was very light even with a two year course. It would dwindle to nothing, they believed, if a third year were added.

Action was postponed for a year or two, but the policy was finally adopted, not without the expression of very serious doubts as to its practicability. And yet what really happened was precisely the opposite of what had been feared. As the requirements were advanced, the enrolment increased. Although the salaries of elementary school teachers are not substantially higher now than they were before the War when a correction is made for the decreased value of the dollar, the normal schools of New York State are now graduating as many students under the three year program as they did a few years ago under a two year program. In New York City, the enrolment in the three city training schools has reached a point where it will be necessary to limit the admissions in order to avoid graduating many more teachers than the elementary schools can absorb.

Similar evidence is furnished by other

states. Under a three year program for elementary school teachers the California teachers' colleges are already confronted by graduating classes so large that they outnumber the vacancies to be supplied with teachers. Massachusetts, which has not as yet required the three year minimum but which offers in her normal schools three year and four year programs for those who wish to take them, has reached the point where the supply of trained teachers exceeds the demand. A similar condition is reported from Wisconsin.

One could not maintain, of course, that the increased attractiveness of the professional schools has been due entirely to the raising of their standards. It is quite possible that a general stabilizing of occupations and rewards has replaced the instability that characterized the war period and the years immediately following. But even granting this, the higher standards have undoubtedly operated to give to the work of teaching an enhanced prestige which in turn has made the professional schools more attractive.

Whatever our educational creed may be, the realization of its ideals will depend first and last on the actual first-hand work of the classroom teacher, especially in the elementary schools. It is in these schools that the real task of democratic education is centered. It is upon the effective education of the many and not merely of the few that the future of democratic civilization hinges. The experience of the European nations since the War has dispelled all doubts about the primacy of mass education. Practically the only nations that have passed through these critical post-war years under a constitutional and representative government are those

in which elementary education had been highly developed before the War. Without a single exception, the countries that have had to abandon democratic institutions and submit either to Bolshevism or to the rule of a dictator are countries in which mass education had been neglected. One by one these countries have fallen either to one side or to the other: Russia, Spain, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal. The lesson is clear and incontestable. It is the basic education of all the people that insures social stability and orderly progress. Even the individual contrasts are sharply and unmistakably drawn. Last Spring, for example, illiterate Poland underwent a revolution, brief but fierce and bloody enough while it lasted, and ending with the emergence of a dictator. At almost the same time, enlightened England passed through the most serious industrial crisis in her history without the firing of a single shot, and with a measure of self-control on the part of her masses that won the admiration of the world.

The surest index of a nation's future, the surest index of its stability and its continued progress, is not its present prosperity nor its present wealth, nor even its provisions for training its leaders, important as these factors are. The surest index of a nation's future is the degree in which its basic schools touch and quicken the great masses of its people, and this depends not only upon the school buildings and school equipment that are provided, but also and far more fundamentally upon the competence of the teachers and quality of the teaching.

Among the first and foremost problems of a modern democracy, therefore, is the selection and training of the teachers

that do the basic work of the lower schools. In our country at the present time the chief emphasis must necessarily be placed upon training. The teaching profession in the aggregate outnumbers the personnel of all other professions combined. To draw all or even most of our teachers from the families that represent the more fortunate economic and cultural levels of society is manifestly impossible. We must take the best that we can get from the population as a whole and strive to make up through training whatever deficiencies the cultural background may represent.

A very brief reference to the present situation will indicate the magnitude of the problem. In the industrial states, the students who enter the normal schools to prepare for the elementary school service come in substantial proportions from the homes of skilled and unskilled laborers. In Massachusetts and Connecticut, for example, more than half of the normal school students represent such homes; in Pennsylvania, nearly one half. In these states, too, the problem of training teachers is still further complicated by a language handicap. In Massachusetts, nearly one third of the normal school students come from homes in which the English language is not spoken. In one of the Massachusetts normal schools, forty per cent of the students represent such homes; and in one of the Connecticut normal schools, more than seventy per cent. The difficulties of fitting such recruits to discharge the most fundamental responsibilities of public service are obvious enough.

In the agricultural states, the normal school students are drawn very largely from farm homes, and in states that are both agricultural and industrial the

farm and labor groups combined supply a large proportion of the recruits for the elementary school service.

The situation may be brought into even sharper relief by contrasting with the normal school students who are preparing to teach in the elementary schools the students in tax-supported colleges and universities, most of whom are headed for other callings. In the normal schools, relatively small proportions of the students come from the homes of business and professional men; but in the colleges and universities nearly two thirds of the students represent such homes, and while the farms are fairly well represented, only a negligible number come from the homes of skilled and unskilled laborers.

The contrast may be carried just a little further to indicate the estimate that the public places upon the work of the elementary school teacher as compared with other callings. For a year's training of a normal school student, the typical state invests less than half of what it expends on a year's education of a student in its tax-supported colleges and universities. The disproportions are even more striking in certain types of higher education. In a typical year, for example, one of the states spent more money from its State treasury on a single agricultural college enrolling 600 students than it spent on ten state normal schools of the same collegiate grade enrolling 3000 students. Contrasts almost as sharp may be found in practically every state.

With the new development of the teachers' colleges many of these contrasts will be reduced; but unless, in the work of these colleges, the primary emphasis is placed on the preparation of elementary school teachers, the situation as regards

the elementary school personnel will still persist. The more competent students and those coming from the better-circumstanced homes will be drawn into the secondary field, leaving the less competent to do the basic work of the elementary school.

The solution is to be sought, I believe, in a new concentration by our professional schools upon the elementary school problem. This should involve, as I have suggested, the elimination at an early date of all curricula that require a briefer residence than three years.

A second need is for a type of training that will contribute to breadth of outlook and richness of culture on the one hand and, on the other hand, to a high degree of skill in the teaching of children. In this connection, one may well emphasize, I am sure, a broader study of both the humanities and the sciences than would be demanded by the need of the prospective teacher for actual teaching materials. And yet these background courses should be selected and organized primarily with reference to the contribution that they will make to the student's equipment *as a teacher*. It is at this point, perhaps, that the essential differences between the professional schools for teachers and institutions of general education need careful definition. I am convinced that the teachers' colleges should take the position that many elements of what we term general or cultural education become for the teacher basic elements in his professional education. In other words, the teacher has a *professional* need for the materials which for others would be considered only as desirable but not absolutely essential parts of a *general* or *cultural* education.

If this position is valid, it would seem

to follow that the background courses in a teachers' college, as well as the professional-content courses and the purely technical courses, may well demand a basis of selection and a type of organization that will reflect their professional purpose.

To carry this argument to its consistent conclusion in practice is probably out of the question at the present time, but there is no reason why the ideal should not be at least recognized as an end toward which to work. The logical conclusion of the argument is that the teachers' college, far from occupying a position subordinate to the liberal arts college, must come in the course of time to represent all that the liberal arts college represents and something in addition.

This is by no means a new ideal. A status quite analogous was achieved by the famous Higher Normal School of Paris. If in its palmy days this institution had been a part of the University, it would have been a temple within the temple rising higher than the temple itself. In other words, the Higher Normal School of Paris rather than the University was the pinnacle of the

French educational system. It is true that its function was the preparation of teachers for the secondary schools and the universities and not at all for the humble posts in the elementary schools. The point is, however, that as a professional school for teachers it overtopped all other educational institutions. If our own professional schools were to achieve a somewhat corresponding rank it would mean, for example, that it would be a greater distinction for a young woman to graduate from one of the Massachusetts State normal schools than from Smith or Wellesly or Mount Holyoke. Personally I do not think that this is by any means too high an ideal toward which to work.

I believe that the American people are ready to support a movement which will bring into our schools, and especially our lower schools, teachers who are generously equipped to do the fundamental work that these schools represent. After all, while society cannot guarantee to every child an intelligent and devoted mother or a wise and provident father, society can guarantee to every child a good school and a competent and cultured teacher.

*"Don't you hear, don't you see—little girl, little boy,
Oh, the world's running over with joy!"*

We may put the beads and the rings and the gift boxes on the shelf; but let us not shelve the songs which express the joy of spring and the joy of life, for these will become memories which will enrich later years and become a fountain of life.—*Lucy Wheelock.*

Bobbie Grasshopper-Green

MARJORIE HERFORD

Seattle, Washington

ONCE upon a time there lived in a big green field a little green grasshopper boy. His name was Bobbie Grasshopper-Green and he was the very happiest little grasshopper there ever was. He had so many things to be happy about. He lived in the most beautiful field in the whole country. The grass grew long and green and everywhere there were hundreds of little red poppies, nodding their heads, and white daisies with frilly caps. Down by the brook there were bright yellow buttercups and tiny blue forget-me-nots and tall green ferns. A great many white butterflies and big orange and black bumble bees flew over the field all day long getting honey from the flowers, and red birds and brown birds and blue birds sang all day because it was so beautiful.

Bobbie Grasshopper-Green was happy too because he had such a beautiful little suit to wear. It was as green as the grass he liked to eat for his dinner and he had a little green cap to match and lovely green stockings for his six little legs. He was just as green as green could be all over and when he hid in the grass not even Brown Squirrel's sharp eyes could find him. But what made Bobbie the very happiest of all was his fiddle. He had one of his very, very own and though it was not like any fiddle you ever saw he thought it the very best in the world because it was the only kind

he knew how to play and he carried it with him wherever he went.

Whenever the moon was shining very brightly the Queen of the fairies would send for Bobbie Grasshopper-Green and he would go to the fairies' ring where the brownies and fairies danced at night. He would play for them the jolliest music you ever heard and when they were tired of dancing the Queen would bring him some little grass sandwiches and a buttercup full of honey dew. He was perfectly happy because he liked to play his fiddle better than anything and he liked to make other people happy too. So this is the way he lived all the long summertime—

He fiddled all night and he hopped all day,
Bobbie Grasshopper-Green so happy and gay.

But by and by the days grew short and the nights were long and chilly. The heavy gray clouds hid the sun and the wind blew cold. All the flowers sent their seed babies to bed and the birds and bees and butterflies flew away. The fairies and brownies crept into their warm little houses under the roots of the trees. They forgot all about little Bobbie Grasshopper for of course no one wanted to dance in the moonlight now. It was far too cold. All the tender green grass turned brown and dry and Bobbie was so hungry and cold and lonely and unhappy that he just crawled about and did not play his fiddle at all.

One day it began to snow and poor little Bobbie was afraid he would freeze. He hopped away as fast as his cold little legs would let him and stopped at the first house he came to. He knocked on the door and when Mrs. Ant who lived there opened it he said:

"Dear Mrs. Ant, please let me come in,
My feet are so cold and my coat is so thin.
The grass has turned brown and the leaves
blown away,
I have nothing to eat and nowhere to stay."

Mrs. Ant had been busy all summer filling her cellar with things to eat ready for winter. She worked very hard all the time and she thought people who danced and sang very foolish so she said:

"Little Grasshopper Boy, what did you do
To fill up your cellar the long summer
through?"

Bobbie Grasshopper did not know what to say for you see he had not worked the way Mrs. Ant had at all. But he was glad he had made people happy anyway so he stood up as straight as he could and said:

"I have no cellar, but a field of flowers
And I sing and play through the summer
hours.
I fiddle a tune for the busy bee
And I play for the fairies' frolicsome glee.
I have no time to store food away
With friends to make happy all the long
day."

Then Mrs. Ant looked very cross and said:

"I did not work all summer long
To give you food for dance and song.
So go away, for never a bite
Will you get from me if you beg all night."

and she shut the door right in his face.

Poor little Bobbie Grasshopper-Green

just crawled away. He was so cold and tired he could scarcely move and the snow began to come down so thick and fast that he could not see where he was going. He thought he would have to lie down and let the big white snowflakes cover him up, but he knew if he did that he would never, never wake up again. So he gave a little hop and then another little hop and then all of a sudden he hopped right into a deep hole. Down, down he fell so fast that he hardly knew what had happened to him. There was a pile of soft dirt at the bottom of the hole so that it didn't hurt him when he dropped on it, but it was so dark he could not see anything at all. He began to crawl around and feel with his little feelers to see if he could find a way out and then he found he was in a tunnel that went on down under the ground. He walked along feeling very carefully and suddenly he came to a little door. It wasn't locked so he opened it and peeped inside. There was the prettiest room he ever saw. A soft brown carpet was on the floor and a fire was burning in the fireplace so that it was nice and warm. There was a little table in front of the fire, set with a tiny plate and knife and fork and all kinds of good things to eat. Right by the table sat the funniest little old lady. She was dressed all in grey fur and she had tiny pink hands and a very long pink nose. Her eyes were shut tight and Bobbie Grasshopper-Green thought she must be asleep, but when she heard him open the door she said:

"Who has opened my back door?
Who is stepping on my brown floor?
Who you are, tell to me
For I am blind and cannot see."

Bobbie hopped right into the middle

of the room and made his best bow and said:

"I'm only Bobbie Grasshopper-Green
The happiest boy that ever was seen
I play my fiddle when I'm happy and glad
But never a bit if I'm sorry or sad."

Then he began to play the jolliest dance he knew. The minute he started to play the little old lady jumped up and began to dance all around the room. The faster he played the faster she danced until she was so tired she couldn't dance any more. Then she sat down and clapped her little pink hands and said:

"Tell me Little Grasshopper Boy,
Who taught you music so full of joy?
And how did you find your way down here?
Tell me quickly, Little Boy Dear."

Grasshopper-Green made another little bow and said:

"My music I learned from the birds and the bees
And the wind that sings in the leafy trees.
How I came here I can quickly tell
For I just hopped down a deep, dark well."

Then he told her about the beautiful field, and how he played for the fairies until cold winter came and drove them all away and turned the grass brown so that he had nothing to eat. He told her how he went to Mrs. Ant's house and asked her to take him in out of the cold and how cross Mrs. Ant was because he had not worked but just played his fiddle to make people happy. When he told the little old lady how he was freezing and starving when he fell into the hole, she almost cried she was so sorry for him. She said he must have some good hot dinner right away and she went to the cupboard and got another little plate and knife and fork

and spoon and they sat down together and ate such a good dinner.

There were roasted beets with gravy red
Potatoes and carrots and sweet root bread
Parsnip pie and best of all
Hot milk-weed juice in glasses tall.

When they had finished Bobbie Grasshopper said very politely:

"I thank you Fairy, kind and good
For giving me this nice hot food.
I'm just as glad as I can tell
That I fell down your deep, dark well."

But the queer little old lady laughed and said:

"I'm not a fairy, but just Lady Mole
And the well you fell down was my breathing hole
I'm just as glad as I can be
That you came down to dine with me."

Then Bobbie Grasshopper helped her wash the dishes and put them away in the little cupboard and when they had finished they pulled up their two little chairs and sat down by the fire to talk.

Lady Mole said she thought Mrs. Ant had been very unkind and selfish not to help him. She said it was a very good thing to work and save food for the winter, but it was very important too to make people happy. Then she asked Bobbie if he would stay with her, for she was blind and had never seen the beautiful world he told about. She said it would make her very happy to have him tell her stories and play for her. She said:

"I have a pantry full of things to eat
And a nice little room all clean and neat.
I will knit you a coat of thistle-down warm
And you shall be sheltered from cold and storm."

This made Little Bobbie Grasshopper-Green very happy and he thanked her



and said he would like to live with her very much and he would work and help her all he could as well as play for her and tell her stories.

Then he took his fiddle and played all the best music he knew. He told her about the beautiful green field and hundreds of flowers and the white butterflies. He told her about the busy bumble bees and the little red birds and blue birds and brown birds that sang because the sky was so blue and everything was so beautiful. He told her too about the parties that the fairies and brownies gave and he sang her a song about the beautiful dress the Queen wore.

The spiders sewed her cobweb dress with silver thread around
And sprinkled it with diamonds found by brownies underground.
The fairies brought her from the woods where grow the flowers sweet

A pair of Lady Slippers soft to fit her tiny feet.

She wore a crown of moonbeams upon her golden hair

And of all the lovely ladies there she was most sweet and fair.

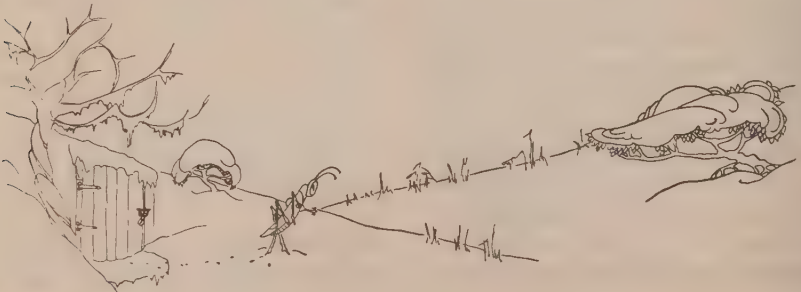
Whenever Bobbie Grasshopper stopped Lady Mole begged him to go on and he did until he was so tired and sleepy he couldn't tell another story. Then Lady Mole opened a little door and showed him

A nice little room with a wee, wee bed
And a soft little pillow for his tiny head.

It didn't take Bobbie Grasshopper-Green very long to hop into bed I can tell you and then

Lady Mole covered him up
Blew out the light
Kissed him softly
And said

GOOD NIGHT.



The Natural Process in Education Via the Platoon System

W. F. KENNEDY

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IN THIS presentation of the advantages of the platoon system, a knowledge of the nature and general plan of platoon organization is presupposed. The following advantages will be discussed.

1. The platoon organization rests its educational philosophy on the inherent traits of children.

2. The platoon plan provides for the extension of the kindergarten activities upward through the primary grades.

3. The platoon plan furnishes enriched opportunities through its contributions of extended curriculum, room equipment and atmosphere, and teaching power.

4. The plan enriches child life through an immediate teacher personality, a definite teacher personality, and a following up of teacher personality.

5. The platoon type of organization is natural, provides life situations, and a pleasurable school atmosphere.

6. It guards the interests of children in terms of a balanced program, in terms of proper time distribution for the needed activities, and places the child in the center of all educational endeavor.

7. The platoon school makes adequate provision for project teaching, individual instruction, an effective health program, social conduct, and a poise and personality that promotes desirable character formation.

PROVISION FOR NATIVE TRAITS

In the first place, the platoon organization provides for the native traits and needs of the child. Children are by nature active. Like the young of all animals, their tendency to constant activity is their most fundamental trait whose exercise and development is necessary for the successful accomplishment of future activities and for the business of adult life. Limited in the exercise of this basic trait, children become wearied, nervous, anemic, and do not develop normally either in physical stature or mental power. There is no weariness so exhausting to children as that which comes from unexercised muscles, no mental effect so stupifying as that which arises from toil on letter, word, sentence cards, or other so-called busy work while the pupil is limited to the narrow confines of a traditional school desk fastened to the floor.

By reducing materially the time usually devoted to such work, and by the addition of enriching materials and opportunities in other rooms where children can move about, and, to which they pass at certain periods of the day, the platoon organization provides the opportunity to stretch muscles, to meet the children of other groups and grades, and to encounter and absorb new experiences.

Children are naturally curious. It

takes more than one adult in home life to answer the innumerable questions of a six or seven year old boy, and in the school environment it needs more than one teacher to satisfy a child's curiosity, particularly when an environment and atmosphere is created to encourage and stimulate curiosity. Traditional teaching practice must be revised. The child, not the teacher, should be the questioner. It is the teacher's business to present educational problems and situations that will provoke the child to mental and physical activity that will produce fundamental educational experiences.

Children are by nature imaginative. Most of a child's waking hours are spent in a make-believe world. In this fancied, yet, during his sojourn in it, real and vivid realm, he is exercising those powers with which nature has endowed him, and which we must constantly nourish if the child gains the personality and does the work for which he has been created. Yet we, his parents and teachers, would drag him into the world of fact, would circumvent his excursions into his wonder realm, and sear his soul with constant drill, unending memory tasks, and continual censure for incompleted duties.

The platoon school with its enriching opportunities, particularly in the emotional and expressional activities, protects and fosters the gift of imagination.

The platoon school provides an outlet, and a discriminating development of the child's emotional nature. In innumerable ways, through movement, expression, voice, and attitude, he is expressing inward thought, feeling, and emotion. The child, as one little girl expressed it, delights in reading a selection "As the author intended it to be read." This ease and naturalness beget an easy manner and pleasing poise.

The platoon school provides for the boy's natural trait of acquisitiveness. The contents of a boy's pocket is a good index of his native interests. Watch those boys of the second and third grades searching for store boxes, taking them carefully apart, saving the nails, and carrying the parts in bundles to school in order that they may have material for house, furniture, and game construction, and doing this in groups for group projects and for the benefit of the whole class. Or, see those little girls saving scraps of cloth, yarn, neckties, etc., from which to make doll clothes, quilts, scarfs, sweaters, and many other articles of handicraft. Children thus engaged in socialized activities, are being trained in thrift habits, are acquiring a habit of planning for future projects of their own conception, and are little inclined to quarrel and fight with each other out of school hours. Such a process is only possible when you provide a room and equipment suited for these activities.

Again children love to work with tools and materials. Five-year-old Johnny goes with his father to mend the garden fence. His sire scarcely drops one tool in order to use another before the boy picks up the one not in use. Give a boy a hammer, lumber, and nails, then he is happy, busy, and learning. This is nature's process.

The platoon school provides through its community and constructive activities for this native trait of children.

Does the one-teacher, one-room school provide as rich an opportunity for the educative processes of little children? We have heard much theorizing on the possibilities of such a school, we have been told of the superior advantages of a "Freer school organization," but, as yet, have not found such.

UPWARD PROJECTION OF KINDERGARTEN
ACTIVITIES

The second advantage of the platoon organization for little children is that it makes provision for the projection of the kindergarten activities upward into grades one, two, and three.

We most heartily endorse the modern progressive program of activities and methods of the kindergarten department, but deplore the general tendency of depriving the children of the primary grades of much of these same processes in order to develop the tools of reading, writing, etc.

Many of the most efficient kindergarten departments have several rooms for the functioning of the varying activities conducted by several teachers. This is as it should be. Then why should not our primary groups have two, three, or four rooms fitted up in terms of the activities practiced therein,—activities providing for sense training, background experience, and the discovery, the protection, and the development of native talents so fundamental in the educational processes? The platoon plan provides for a closer relation between the first grade and the kindergarten in both activities and organization.

It has been proposed that the kindergarten type of organization be continued through at least grades one and two, by giving to the children of these grades a room equipped with apparatus for the varying activities, by organizing groups sufficiently small to be cared for properly, and by securing teachers prepared to conduct all activities. Do you not know that were teachers available, the costs of such a plan would be prohibitive—not only in equipment but also in instruction. Costs would mount to double or triple

the present level. In Pittsburgh the cost of the instruction of a kindergarten child for a half-day session is greater than the cost of the instruction of an elementary child for a full day session.

ENRICHMENT

The platoon plan secures the advantages of all kindergarten enrichment by means of its extended curriculum, room equipment and atmosphere, and special teachers.

It is often said that the primary grades should not be platooned because it is the chief business of this period to develop the so-called tools of reading, spelling, writing, numbers, and language, and that when pupils have a working ability in these, then, and not before, can they function properly in a platoon organization.

Rather are not the tools of a proper educational development of children their interests, native traits, inherent powers, their senses? When these are trained and made the avenues to a child's intelligence the educative process is sane, efficient, and pleasurable.

What is wrong with the general practice in the training of the children of the primary grades? The weakest part of the educational program is in the organization and practices generally applied to the children of grades one to three. We seem everlastingly concerned with getting children of these grades to read earlier, better, and more books; to write more legibly; to spell more correctly; to use number combinations more quickly and accurately. We multiply methods for the purpose of getting a better product, when our chief concern should be to build up fundamental experiences, to sharpen the intellectual appetite, and to keep children well and

happy in order to secure a process that will determine desirable attitudes, habits, and life tendencies.

The third advantage of the platoon organization is its enriching contributions. These are threefold. In the first place, an enlarged and enriched curriculum is offered. Perhaps the chief characteristics of the platoon plan is its flexibility. One can put into the curriculum and organization what is judged most suited to a child's best development. In Pittsburgh, besides the special activities belonging to the higher grades, we have added story telling, language games, dramatization, library facilities, and community and constructive activities. These function not in a hit or miss way, but in a regular schedule throughout the semester.

The second enriching contribution is a room atmosphere that speaks forth the subject taught. If a room throbs with a nature message conveyed to the child through living plants, singing birds, crawling turtles and snakes, rabbits, and butterflies; if the child watches, from day to day, the unfolding cocoon, if he catches on screen, by means of lanterns or film, the beauty, glory, and meaning of earth and sky, his senses are quickened, his powers of observation are trained, and he acquires a love of nature and nature's God in a way not possible in a one room situation.

So also a room equipped with tools, work benches, lumber, games, and furniture of the children's own making speaks the message of a work shop, an attic, a place for building and making. Thus also another room gives the atmosphere of music, or art, or play.

If it be not unnatural in our home life to cook in a kitchen, bathe in a bath-

room, eat in a dining room, sleep in a bedroom, and enjoy musical, literary, and social pursuits in a living room, why should it be thought unnatural to play in a well equipped play room, study nature in a science room, engage in art and constructive activities in rooms fitted for the purpose, study and enjoy music in the music room, and study the fundamentals in the home room?

The third enriching contribution is enriched teaching. There exists an inconsistency in the current practice of parents selecting a specialist to conduct the musical education of a child on piano or violin, and the current thought that any primary teacher can conduct all the activities of little children. Children of the first, second, and third grades are at the period of most vivid and lasting impressions.

Here it is that most care must be taken to develop good tone quality, proper breathing habits, and voice placing. Here it is that children should be led to express themselves in art and language, and to observe and appreciate the earth around them. Here it is that appreciation, initiative, good habits, and attitudes must function most definitely. And here it is that a specialist is most needed—one who hums to the innate spirit of her field, and, because she hums to art, nature, music, or play, she compels her pupils to hum with her. In the vernacular of farm life, why should we wait till the apples become specked before we begin to take care of them?

BALANCED TEACHER INFLUENCE

The fourth advantage of the platoon organization lies in a balanced teacher influence. Much has been made of the

loss of the mother-teacher's personality and influence through the platoon organization.

Let us analyze the situation as it generally exists in a one teacher, one room school. A group of 1B pupils are enrolled under the care of Miss M. The following semester most of these pupils are promoted to 1A grade under the care of Miss K. The next semester they pass to 2B under the charge of Miss C. These children in three semesters have had three different teachers who have scarcely become acquainted with their environmental influences, peculiarities, and mental differences before they are taken from her charge and she receives a new group.

What happens in a platoon school? Miss M is a home room teacher and has two groups each for a half of every school session, under her charge. After 1B pupils, who have been her charges for a semester, are promoted to 1A grade they still remain with her for the second semester. The home room teacher's personality and influence are not only exercised on each group for one half of each session but are extended to double the length of time. She has a longer period of time to exert the so-called motherly care, and, consequently, can render greater service.

But in addition to this influence three or four other teachers have charge of not only 1B and 1A pupils, but also 2B and 2A groups and on up through a number of the grades. Their immediate influence may be less than that of the home room teacher, but having charge of the same pupils through a period of from three to six years, they have a continuity of interest in them, a knowledge of their peculiarities. They are able to control tendencies, help in proper habit

formation, and give direction to processes.

What is the real measure of a teacher's influence in the life of a child? Is it not manifested in, and determined by her personal interest in the activities and native pursuits of the child? Each of us, in recalling some teachers whom we remember as great, know that their power was not felt by their strength in teaching subjects, or by the period of time we were under their charge, but always by some intangible quality expressed in terms of a look of appreciation, approval, an interest in a common pursuit or hobby, and a personal note expressed by poise, strength of purpose, or an attitude toward life problems.

From what I have just said is it not easily seen that there is an actual increase in not only the amount of time which a given group of children spends with the home room teacher, but that also her influence over them is greater owing to the fact that she has a greater length of time to exert her personality after acquaintance has been made.

This illustration refutes the stock argument set up by those who do not understand the platoon school organization. Through an experience covering a period of more than ten years in platoon school supervision and direction I have come to count this advantage as of outstanding importance when measured in terms of the personal influence of the teacher upon a given child and upon a given group of children. To say the least, the contacts between the teachers of special subjects and the children furnish a fine balance when weighed with the prolonged time a pupil spends in the presence of a home-room teacher in a school organized on the platoon plan. I quote William M. Davidson, Superintendent

of the Pittsburgh Public Schools, on this point, "If it be true that the ideal school consists of a teacher with the spirit of a Mark Hopkins on one end of a log and a pupil on the other, such a school is made far better still when the pupil, in a given period of time, is enabled to have a number of Mark Hopkinses on the end of the log instead of just one such teacher to constitute the sole influence in the child's educational life. One of the outstanding opportunities of the platoon school is that it does precisely this, namely; multiplies within sane and proper bounds the number of high class teachers who influence, for all time, the life of boys and girls during the entire period of their school days."

NATURALNESS

The fifth advantage of the platoon organization is the naturalness of the plan.

During the fourth and fifth decades of the past century, before the highly formalized graded school plan came into vogue, there existed in many towns and cities a platoon type of school organization called the double-headed system. This plan consisted of companion schools, a reading school and a writing school on adjacent lots or at some distance apart. A group of pupils attended the one in the morning and the other in the afternoon—several groups alternating. The teacher of the first school taught the then fundamental subjects, the teacher of the writing school was a specialist, his art, made so by the Spencerian system, was the new entrant into the family of school curricula. Here you have a platoon organization in its simplest form. We have come back to an enrichment of first principles, to a more Americanized type of organization, to a more natural procedure.

Surely if Miss X. has ability in, and a preparation and preference for teaching music, if Miss Y. lives and breathes art, if Miss Z. revels in woods, fields, trees, plants, and birds, and if Miss A, being of a more practical mind and habit, desires to teach the three R's, why should they not do the work which nature, interest, and preparation have best fitted them to do, when, by means of their talent and appreciation, they are able to discover talent in pupils, and to develop appreciation and power in them.

This is just what we do in our domestic, business, and industrial affairs when little more than personal comfort or matters of economy are concerned. How much more is it necessary to follow this natural procedure when the physical, mental, and spiritual welfare of children are involved?

Much is made by those who have not had experience with platoon schools of the assumed unnatural conditions arising out of the need of obeying frequent signals, cutting short incompleeted lesson development, and the compulsion imposed on little children of finding their way about a large building and becoming lost in the process.

There are no more signals to be obeyed in a well organized platoon school than in a single unit or non-platoon school. There is the same opportunity in both types of organization to anticipate the signal so as to complete the lesson development. There is also the same degree of movement in each with the difference that platoon children pass to fresher environmental conditions. Moreover, is not this a constant demand in life situations? Are not our children and all of us compelled to obey signals for dinner, trains, bed time,—a multiple demand to cut short some interesting process? As to the assertion that children of grades one

and two are unable to move from room to room, unguided, the statement is made by those hunting for excuses and obstacles. Children are not exploited in school by our demands on their physical strength, but they are despoiled by unnecessary demands on their intellectual powers.

I am inclined to think that those who characterize the platoon school as a "highly artificial plan" of school organization neither know nor have visited a properly organized school of this type.

BALANCED PROGRAM

The sixth advantage of a platoon school for little children is that the plan provides well balanced activities and a subject-time distribution.

In the single room school, one teacher being responsible for all the activities of the group is apt to emphasize through increased time and teaching strength those subjects for which she has a bent, the subjects on which depend the promotion of her pupils, and on which, also, her rating as a teacher might be based.

The platoon plan renders it practically impossible for a teacher to subtract time from one subject in order to add to another subject which holds for her a greater appeal. In the home rooms, however, there is an opportunity for the teacher to adjust the time in terms of weakness in any particular line.

The time allowed me to present my theme is about exhausted, but not my subject. Under the seventh contribution of the platoon school, I shall group a number of advantages, touched upon lightly, but by no means unimportant.

The platoon plan makes adequate provision for the working out of projects. Each special subject lends itself natur-

ally to the project method. In fact, these subjects are largely developed by a series of projects. In the home room, the fundamentals can be best motivated and developed through projects involving language, spelling, writing, and information gained by extended reading. Through correlation and coordination, a project undertaken in either the home room or a special department may receive its contributions from both fields.

ALLOWANCE FOR INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

The platoon plan makes adequate provision for individual instruction and research. It is safe to say that more of this kind of instruction functions in a platoon school than in either the departmentalized or traditional plans. The platoon school promotes a friendly understanding of the individual child. Many a clash of personality is avoided where there is a mutual and friendly understanding. There is no child so erratic but there is some teacher to plead for him.

The platoon plan provides adequately for a desirable health program.

Dr. Kerr, Supervisor of Medical Inspection in the Pittsburgh Schools, in summing up the health advantages of a platoon school, says,

1. Children have opportunities for more open air activities.
2. Children have less prolonged periods of sitting or standing.
3. Children have more diversified interests—that help to resist nervous and mental troubles.
4. Children have more exercise due to frequent changes from room to room.
5. Children, under the observation of from three to six different teachers, are less likely to suffer from physical disorder or defect of a hindering nature without being detected and corrective measures applied.

In brief, not free expression, but undue repression is the common cause of nervous condition. The higher health efficiency of the platoon school renders children less liable to nervous disorders.

The platoon school provides unequalled opportunities to little children for enlarging their vocabulary and enriching their phrasing. Pestalozzi, in justification of his object method, said in substance, "If children do not have words to express their meaning they will reach after them." Under the care of four or five teachers conducting varying activities in rooms the atmosphere of which is charged with the message of the subject, pupils are subjected to a wide range of words and expressions which they readily grasp and proceed to use.

The platoon school provides a pleasant atmosphere. Children develop best under happy conditions. To watch the beaming faces of little children, as they pass through the halls or are busy with varying activities, is to know that children enjoy school life. Under such conditions a boy during his third or fourth year is little likely to acquire a distaste for school and to foster traits of truancy and vagrancy.

The platoon school furnishes desirable conditions for the formation of character.

To learn, to be, to serve is not the proper sequence in the developing process, but rather, *to serve, to be, to learn*.

The platoon school furnishes opportunities all along the line to children to serve each other, and out of such service comes a condition of being. Poise and personality, gracious and helpful are being developed. Each day brings new problems, new experiences, and each day the child learns what is needful for the day. From opportunities to exercise self-control, responsibility, initiative, judgment,

come the fundamental steps in the formation of good habits that is the corner stone of worthwhile character.

Some one has well said, "The kingdom of character education is in the hearts, minds, and muscles of the child, and not in general precepts and abstract principles, and to wrestle out and solve an actual situation that arises in play and in work among his fellows, and, finally, to make an affirmation of his own relative choice, goes to the depths of his being. Such affirmations are the foundations upon which character is built. Standards are not final results, but habits."

What should be the aim of education? For what are schools maintained? The answer to these questions is, in the words of Dr. William M. Davidson, "The supreme objectives of education should be:

First, the conscious development of personality.

Second, the earnest promotion of that spirit of mutuality which, in its refinement and perfection, shall promote the spirit of good will among the peoples of the world.

Third, the advancement of the cause of that form of human welfare so essential to the spiritual growth of a democratic society."

The platoon type of school organization through its greater freedom of movement, its flexibility of organization, its opportunities for practicing initiative, responsibility, self-control, and school loyalty, gives children a better chance to learn social conduct. A school code of manners is developed and valuable lessons in democratic behavior and habit are gained—all of which make possible the attainment of the objectives so well defined by my chief—through our system of platoon schools.

The Natural Process in Education Via the Non-Platoon System

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TWO approaches employed in schools in promoting learning stand in marked contrast. For the sake of brevity I have denominated them the formal and natural procedures.

The formal procedure places large stress on books, assignments, and questions. It assumes that the supervisory and administrative staff know what should be taught, in what order, and when. It further assumes that upon the basis of the plans made by the supervisory and administrative staff the teacher may make her plans pretty largely apart from and without intimate reference to her children.

The natural procedure places large stress on the child's questions, problems, difficulties, and needs with the aim, first, of finding what the things in the entire program of social education are which he should master next, and second, of finding how to help guide and stimulate him in their mastery. The natural procedure keeps in mind the general field of work to be covered from grade to grade in each subject. It determines, however, just when a particular body of subject matter shall be taught in light of the questions, problems, and difficulties which have arisen through the contacts of pupils and teacher with each other.

The formal procedure, it will be seen from the above, attacks the child with

the object of securing a result. The natural procedure provides the necessary conditions to promote child learning and supplies guidance and inspiration to the learning child with the object of arousing in him a response to the educative influences in his environment, so that his growth and development shall be stimulated and promoted as a result of this response.

Those who are dominated by the formal attack in promoting education tend to systematize and organize with great thoroughness everything connected with the school. Schemes for carrying through all the steps necessary are projected with great definiteness and exactness. The danger is that insufficient allowance will be made for changes in the procedure which ought to be made by the teachers and supervisors when they bring it to bear upon children, in order that improvements may take place which will enable the general plan to be so adjusted as to secure larger results than could be obtained if such modifications were not made. It is from the standpoint of its extreme mechanization and planning for details without due regard to the varying pupil groups which are to be educated by the mechanical scheme that the platoon school is so open to criticism. It is from the standpoint of the completeness of its plans that danger arises.

In the consideration of this as of other educational policies, it is important always to bear in mind that schools are established and maintained by the people for the sole purpose of promoting learning on the part of children. They do not exist in order that school plants and teaching staffs may be needed nor that any special organization of schools may be put into operation.

It is important to bear in mind also that I am considering the wisdom of employing the platoon organization of schools below the seventh grade only. To discuss the effects of its operation in the junior and senior high schools complicates the problem beyond the possibilities of the time assigned. The same general points of view and warnings are necessary, however, in considering the operation of the platoon school in junior and senior high schools.

It is very necessary to clarify in this discussion that all should understand that we are not contrasting the platoon school and the results we may expect from its work with the old time traditional school and the results that may be expected from it. Rather we are examining the platoon type of the modern socialized school to determine whether it is adapted to secure the results expected in the first six grades in as large measure as they may be secured by the modern socialized school if some other type of organization and operation than the platoon type is employed. In so far as the discussion indicates or implies contrasts, they will be between the platoon type of school organization and operation and a freer, less mechanical plan of organizing and operating schools. Both types of schools, however, we shall assume, may be considered modern socialized schools.

We shall understand also that a modern socialized school aims to equip its pupils directly, definitely, certainly, economically, and fundamentally for the practical duties and responsibilities of all sorts which are involved in living successfully. Such a school is, therefore, responsible for equipping its pupils with necessary usable knowledge, functional skills, and effective methods of studying and working. Wholesome right attitudes must also be established in the largest possible measure through the work of the modern socialized school.

To further define the issues in this discussion, it is necessary to indicate the respects in which the freer type of school and the platoon type are alike and the respects in which they are different. Any fair listing of the characteristics of each reveals that *they have many more points of likeness than of difference*. They are seeking the same large ends and the same outcomes through their work. They serve the same kind and variety of children. The teacher of one type of school is not distinguishable from the teacher in the other type of school in personality, training, or potential ability. The same curricular content and the same types of activity are to be found in both types of schools. The disciplinary problems of the teacher are the same regardless of the type of school. The laws governing how children learn are no different. The instructional equipment and materials used do not differ. The modern non-platoon school plant provides all the special rooms and features which are considered so essential in the platoon school, such as a library, a gymnasium, an auditorium, science rooms, etc. The standards set for realization and the means employed for measuring achievement are

the same. Yet other important and fundamental likenesses will doubtless occur to you.

Three important differences only distinguish the platoon school from the freer types of schools: (1) A school plant of a given size has a greater pupil capacity if the school using it employs a platoon organization; (2) The platoon school departmentalizes its teaching in all grades to a much greater extent; (3) It operates on a program requiring the types of work to change and the pupils to move at the same time throughout the building and plant in use.

Our discussion now narrows itself to raising and answering the question as to whether better educative results, the better socialization of children, may be expected in the first six grades from such increased numbers, such departmentalization of teaching, and such programming of work as the platoon school employs, or from the plans of organizing teaching and programming work as they are developed in freer types of schools. The discussion will be concerned from this point with seeking an answer to this question.

It is hardly necessary to remind you that the discussion must be theoretical throughout. The results secured by the two types of schools are not all measurable nor is scientific data available to contrast the measurable results which have been secured by the two types of schools.

In seeking the answer to the question raised, we must bear in mind the opening statement of this discussion, viz. that schools are maintained by the people merely that fundamental learning and proper socialization may be promoted in children. Before we may answer in any basic way the major ques-

tion raised above, as to whether the platoon of the non-platoon type of school is more desirable in achieving the people's purpose, we must remind ourselves of the findings of sociology, psychology, and good school practice in reference to how fundamental learning takes place with definiteness, certainty, and economy.

Both the platoon and the non-platoon advocates agree that learning takes place most satisfactorily when the conditions are as natural as possible. Mr. Spain says (Teachers College Record, December 1925, page 209): "It is a fact frequently noted that a child's experiences gained outside of school function better and are more unified than those acquired in school." In their theoretical discussions both camps advocate the use of the natural procedure in promoting the learning and socialization of children. Mr. Spain has well said in defending the platoon school (Teachers College Record, December 1925, p. 296): "It is not claimed that the platoon school represents a different philosophy, or method from that exemplified in our best schools of the non-platoon type." Dr. Bonser has well said in opposing the platoon school (Teachers College Record, December 1925, page 310): "Basically, the fundamental reason for opposing it (the platoon school) is the principle that *no highly artificial plan* can minister as adequately to the complex and highly interrelated needs of the growing child as can a natural plan, permitting more intimate personal contact, interplay of minds, and sympathy between pupils and teachers."

Under what circumstances are the conditions for learning most natural? All agree that ideal, natural conditions

for learning are most in evidence when a competent searcher for some new truth, insight, or procedure goes about an investigation free from school restraints or teacher domination. Two or three well-known illustrations may be cited. Steinmetz of the General Electric Company was free to work under ideal natural conditions. What he didn't know that he needed, he sought to learn through investigations developed and carried forward without restraint, using such sources and procedures as promised help on his problems. Edison works so in his laboratory. Dr. Banting, the discoverer of insulin, learned richly in the process of his investigations where the conditions for work were singularly free and natural.

Under school control such natural conditions for learning are available in general only to the graduate student. He is at liberty to determine upon a problem which has great significance for him and to go about breaking it up into the questions which must be answered before his problem is solved. He meets difficulties which he overcomes as economically as possible; he encounters obstacles which he finds ways to remove. In all of these undertakings his efforts are focused upon solving the large problem which gave him a start and which supplies him impetus until it is completed.

In the school where it is sought to keep the learning conditions as natural as possible, the teacher employs stimuli, environmental influences, in the form of lessons, readings, lectures, lantern slides, and the like, which he judges are adapted to the mental level of his pupils and in keeping with the general ends for which he believes organized society wishes him to strive. Resulting from these stimuli

are certain effects upon the group or class. When the effects are all resolved, if the teacher's effort succeeds, some enterprise has been set up for execution, some responsibility has been assumed by the group, some undertaking has been launched which has educative, socializing possibilities if successfully carried to completion. The teacher's object is to launch his class in an enterprise, responsibility, or undertaking which shall be meaningful, and significant to the class, and at the same time rich in educative, socializing possibilities. School tasks thus launched are distinctively purposive to the pupils and hence their successful execution is fundamentally motivated. When the pupils proceed to perform the task they are attempting (it may be issuing a school paper, or providing an assembly program, or dramatizing the Constitutional Convention, for example), they find many questions which they cannot at once answer, problems they must solve, difficulties and obstacles which they must overcome, and many needs they must satisfy. If the task has been accepted as theirs and as important to them, then they are anxious to master the questions, problems, difficulties, obstacles, needs which arise, for they are truly theirs. Their mastery is necessary to the achievement they wish for themselves. Under such circumstances, the conditions for studying, investigating, experimenting that they may learn in order to do what they wish are approximately as natural as those under which we saw that Steinmetz, Edison, Banting, and graduate students worked.

Learning which takes place under such natural conditions may be abundantly illustrated from the daily work obtaining in good schools. Such learn-

ing conditions are not only ideally desirable; they have been achieved—not generally, but in progressive modern schools. A few brief illustrations will make definitely clear the point of view maintained here and afford a partial basis for evaluating the distinctive features of the platoon school.

The following sketch of a May-day party conceived and executed by a third grade shows the pupils at work under natural conditions and reveals the contribution of each of the various subjects of the school to the unified finished result. The object of the pupils was to provide a party which their parents would be interested to attend. The program provided was to show the visiting parents some of the interesting work their children were doing in school. During the month of April, much of the program time was given to developing plans for the party and the program for it. In their language time, the pupils learned how to write a formal invitation, letters asking for help, and letters of thanks and appreciation. They also learned how to write out a program and prepare it in suitable form for the use of their guests. They also wrote papers telling some of their experiences in earning money needed in giving the party. In the drawing lessons they prepared program covers and illustrations needed in presenting their program. Their arithmetic work was concerned with various computations necessary to financing their party and to planning for their guests. Music and physical education time was used in preparing numbers for the program. History contributed a major program number which was dramatized.

In the above it is clear that the pupils worked under the motive of successfully

executing a worthy purpose. All of the work of the school contributed to the end set for realization. Learning occurred in the process of meeting various problems and overcoming various difficulties involved in completing their undertaking. There was no loss in effort from going to a special teacher of art, music, physical education, dramatization. When special help was needed to improve the product they were seeking, it was secured. Some help was secured from the pupils of other rooms in the building.

The learning experiences of a second grade, reported in the October, 1925, *Journal of Educational Method*, illustrates beautifully the rich results derived from working under natural conditions. The purpose was to study the little children of many lands through an imaginary trip to these various lands. The undertaking came about in a very natural way and the initial motive supplied the necessary urge to carry out the enterprise with rich results to geography and the other subjects which became related as the work moved forward. Reading, spelling, language, arithmetic, music, art, physical education, civics, and nature study were unified in the large enterprise. Motive for necessary drill operated fundamentally throughout. What was done from start to finish arose from the pupils' real need for the knowledge or skills which they acquired. The teacher reports that the course of study in all subjects was covered with many values to the pupils not usually derived from the assigned work. Aspects of the undertaking which proved too difficult for the second grade but which were important to the finished result were willingly done by higher grades, thus affording all the pupils

fine experiences and good training in co-operation.

Such learning experiences as the above could be multiplied indefinitely. These are typical of both procedure and results when the learning conditions are kept natural and the pupils' purpose is kept unified.

Teaching which promotes learning under such natural conditions as are illustrated above is the ideal of every up-to-date socialized school. The leading thinking platoonists wish such learning conditions for their pupils. They recognize that purposive, motivated effort is productive of more fundamental learning and that such learning takes place with greater definiteness, certainty, and economy under natural conditions.

With this view before us of the conditions under which learning takes place most satisfactorily, we may now consider the effects of the greater number of pupils and of such departmentalizing and programming as are employed by the platoon school. Do these three distinctive features of the platoon school tend to promote the establishment and maintenance of natural conditions for learning, or do they tend to exercise a somewhat negative effect from this standpoint?

The *first* distinctive feature claimed for the platoon school is that any plant of a given size, if organized as a platoon school, will serve more pupils than will a non-platoon school. One must understand, however, that this is accomplished by providing other facilities than standard classrooms. The Gary Survey Report (General Account, page 27) shows that there is no saving in plant area resulting from platooning a school. Other facilities are provided although fewer standard classrooms are used.

Experience shows that these facilities are quite as, if not more, expensive than regular classrooms. Figures indicate that the per pupil cost for providing a plant for a platoon school is about equal to, or somewhat greater than for a non-platoon school.

Although in the matter of plant cost, the platoon school may or may not be at a disadvantage, this is not the most serious question arising from its effort to care for numbers. Much more serious than this is the large number of different pupils, running into the hundreds, each special subject teacher must care for per day and per week. Correspondingly serious is the number of different teachers each child must meet and adapt himself to daily, varying from eight to ten. Any experienced teacher knows that natural learning conditions cannot be maintained under these conditions.

There is further the health menace of seating pupils of all grades in seats of a given size in the special subject's rooms. Evidently these seats are much too large for lower grade pupils, or entirely too small for upper grade pupils. In the home rooms from which these children in grades one to six come to the special rooms, in any properly seated schools, will be found at least five sizes of desks, and in addition, some adjustable desks will be used. While the number served by a school plant is not an unimportant factor, it should not be the determining factor.

A major reason urged by its advocates in support of the platoon school in its early history was the number it served. Now its advocates would have us believe it is the ideal school in which to carry out the most modern views of how children learn and become socialized.

In considering its merits, it must not be forgotten, however, that it was not originated to supply better learning conditions, but to take care of the increasing numbers in rapidly growing cities.

The *second* distinctive feature of the platoon school consists in the plan and extent of departmentalizing the work. Reading, writing, arithmetic, spelling, and formal English are taught by the home room teacher. Evidently the home room teacher is essentially a drill teacher in view of the subjects assigned. The other work is done in special rooms by special teachers. Outside the home room the work in the library, auditorium, gymnasium, play yard, and in science, literature, music, art is carried by seven or eight different persons when the platoon organization is most ideal. Such an organization requires each child to adjust himself to eight or ten teachers daily and each special subject's teacher to meet daily more groups of children than she can possibly know the dominant purposes of and more individual pupils than it is possible for her to know and guide as individuals in the learning process.

The almost inevitable result of this situation, in which the platoon school child finds himself, is an absence of natural working and learning conditions such as we saw were essential to the best work by Steinmetz, Edison, Banting, graduate students, and such as we saw were possible in elementary schools in the May-day party and the geography illustrations. Such detailed departmentalization is almost certain to result in the teaching of subjects as such rather than in their mastery by pupils who need them in the achievement of some major purpose. The drill in the home

room necessary to establish an ability can only be meaningful as it is motivated by some need for the ability which the pupils have discovered in their effort to execute an enterprise requiring more ability than they possess, to write, or spell, or figure, and the like. With the drill work divorced from the more cultural subjects as obtains under platoon departmentalization, it is very apt to be formal, routine-like, and mechanical, lacking in fundamental motive and inspiration.

In defense of the many teachers a child meets in a platoon school, it is said that no one teacher is capable of teaching all of the subjects provided by the modern school curriculum. That may be granted although many of you could cite outstanding exceptions to the statement. A great teacher, who is absorbed in and devoted to the welfare of her class of 35 or 40 pupils may lack a little in the technic of art or music, and yet so relate the work in these subjects to the total growth of her pupils as to bring them far greater growth and inspiration than the specialist can bring them with all of her technic when she is teaching hundreds daily.

We are not compelled, however, to choose between one teacher, who teaches all subjects and the many teachers required by the platoon plan. The teachers in charge of the same or bordering grades, two or three in number, may be so chosen as to provide excellent ability in all lines of work. Such exchanges of work between these teachers may be planned as will insure excellent teaching in each subject. This plan keeps the numbers small that any teacher meets and each child has but few teachers. By this simple arrangement also each teacher can know, through conferences

with her neighboring teacher, just how to carry her work so that it fits into and furthers the major purpose of each group of pupils with whom she works. This plan provides all of the departmentalization necessary to secure good ability in the teaching of each subject. It preserves natural learning conditions, and it avoids many dangers inherent in such departmentalization as obtains in a large platoon school.

Mr. Spain has well said ("The Platoon School," page 85): "It is urged that in a departmentalized school, instead of having a series of experiences which are related and which have a common end, what the pupil really has is a series of unrelated experiences in which he realizes no common purpose. The result is disintegration."

Mr. Spain further says (page 87): "In the platoon school departmentalization in special subjects exists in all grades. It is conceded that the work might become unrelated and disintegrated."

I commend the thought and point of view in these quotations to the thoughtful and prayerful consideration of all platoon enthusiasts. The dangers inherent in extreme departmentalization are so great that we may expect them to be overcome, if at all, only in the unusual school.

The *third* distinctive feature of the platoon school is that all pupils and classes in a building change types and places of work at the same time. By reason of this characteristic, the pupils in platoon schools often refer to their school, affectionately perhaps, as "the grand change school." That great value is attached to this feature of the school is evidenced by Mr. Spain's statement on page 56 of his book on "The Platoon

School" in which he says: "The program is the most important factor of the organization."

Any large school or other organization must systematize its work, planning for proper balances in work and in the use of the facilities provided. The great danger is, of course, that the mechanics considered essential to the smooth operation of a plan may be so magnified and given such right of way as to lessen greatly the very results the school exists to accomplish. This is just what is in danger of happening in the platoon school. Natural ways of working with resulting learning can hardly be programmed with such mathematical, mechanical, machine-like accuracy that the work of 25 to 30 groups of pupils should all be changed at once. There need to be ways to depart from the regular set schedule so that the job a class has in hand may be done with thoroughness and deliberation when the conditions are right. In a non-platoon organization, when the conditions strongly suggest it, the red tape schedule may be cut into blue ribbons in the interest of large achievement in learning, since all rooms of an entire building are not compelled to observe a uniform program.

I was asked to speak on the negative on this topic. I would not be true to my understanding of the situation, however, if I leave the impression that the platoon school is totally bad in plan and results. Were I speaking in support of the platoon school, I should be able to make a strong case for it from many standpoints. My duty, however, was to sound warnings, to point out dangers, to suggest possible weaknesses in the platoon school, to urge upon you things which should be guarded against in

considering the use of the platoon school. However, if I were operating a platoon school, I would try to believe in it and safeguard my pupils and teachers against its inherent weaknesses.

In closing the discussion, let me cover several points briefly which there is not time to discuss fully. In the first place, be not deceived or misled by the spread of the platoon school. That alone is not evidence that it is the solution of the ills needing correction in the traditional school. The fact that it is one of the fads in modern education is sufficient reason to millions for making use of it without knowing more than superficially its merits or demerits.

In the second place, the fact that the people without it in a city want it is not of itself alone evidence that they should have it. The people are very apt to want what others have, if it is *new* and *talked about by the press*.

In the third place, the fact that when its results are measured to its advantage against the results of other types of schools in a city is not alone convincing evidence of its superiority. It can well be that the greater attention it gets, since it is new and under scrutiny, will produce better results. The administrative and supervisory staff is apt to give it sufficient attention to insure its producing better results. In considering the comparative merit of results secured from the platoon and non-platoon schools in the same city, it should be borne in mind that those making these tests, so far as results have been published, are apt to be biased judges. The only impersonal survey of the results produced by a school system organized on the platoon plan are from the Gary schools. Unfortunately these results are

old, going back to 1918. The results found there, however, do not encourage one very strongly to believe in the superior achievements which may be expected from children attending platoon schools. I note these comments from the general account of the Gary School Survey:

"The Gary experiment has not yet successfully solved the problems insofar as necessary instruction in common school branches is concerned."

"The quality of instruction at Gary falls short of what is necessary."

At the conclusion of the handwriting test this statement is made: "Gary results in the free choice writing test are lower in quality" than the standard for the country would require.

The following was the conclusion of the spelling test: "It would appear, therefore, that as thus tested grade by grade, the Gary children spell less well than the children of the 84 cities with which comparison was made."

The conclusion of the arithmetic test was: "The Gary results compare unfavorably with scores elsewhere obtained."

As a result of the reading test the following statement is made: "The Gary children, with the possible exception of the second and third grades, read more slowly and make slightly more errors than the children of other systems."

In the fourth place, the attractiveness of certain physical features of the platoon school may have too great weight in leading administrators to conclude that the platoon school must be adopted in order to secure these features. I refer to the provision of special rooms, gymnasias, auditoriums, and the like. All of these features are fine and all modern

schools need them in their work, but it is not necessary to adopt the platoon organization in order to have these. Some of the best schools of which I know in the United States possess all of these features, but they are operated under a freer organization and a freer program schedule than obtains in the platoon school. School administrators

must be courageous enough to demand these features in schools because they are essential to the socialization of the school and to the results the school should secure for each child. No one, however, should adopt the platoon organization merely as a means of securing these desirable features. They can be had on other grounds.

SPRINKLING

Sometimes in the summer
When the days are very hot,
My daddy takes the garden hose
And finds a shady spot;
And then he calls me to him
And looks at my bare toes,
And says, "Why you need sprinkling,
You little thirsty rose!"

DOROTHY MASON PIERCE.

Creative and Constructive Work in Kalamazoo

The Movies

NINA JACKSON, 2A Washington School, Kalamazoo, Michigan

ILLUSTRATIONS of the story *The Three Billy Goats* were the inspiration for a movie in an advanced second grade group. The captions which preceded each picture necessitated thorough and comprehensive reading. It required much thought and experimentation to fasten the subtitles and pictures together to form a reel and put it on a frame work with rollers so that it would really be a moving picture. Large curtains, used

to cover the framework, were made of paper and painted. The smaller stage curtains were made from plain material, tied and dyed as a group problem. In giving the movie to the children of other rooms, each child participated and had something definite to do, such as being the manager, cashier, usher, movie operator or playing in the band which provided the music. The price of admission was one penny and the proceeds were used to buy library books.



ALL READY FOR THE SHOW TO BEGIN



FARMING ON A SMALL SCALE

A Farm Project

IMRA ARCHBOLD, *1B Washington School, Kalamazoo, Michigan*

Last fall many children in this 1B group had such interesting farm experiences that the desire to give expression to them was only natural. Thus our farm project developed and carried over into many avenues of expression. Through drawing, painting, modeling, free-hand cutting, and conversation each child had opportunity to express his ideas. The house, barn, silo, chicken

coop, pig-pen, windmill, animals, wagons and other farm implements show how rich was the situation in fostering the child's creative and constructive powers. Mood and feeling found outlet in original and supplementary songs and poems, rhythms, dramatizations, and dramatic games. Reading experience was enriched by the poem *Out in the Orchard* and a recipe for making butter.

Department of Nursery Education

An Amateur Nursery School

BY A MOTHER-TEACHER

Young mothers everywhere are more eager than ever before to give wise guidance to the earliest years of childhood. Few mothers have either nursery school or kindergarten training; many mothers have no nursery schools or kindergartens available to help in solving the problem, but that should not mean abandoning the quest. The following sketch of An Amateur Nursery School was written by a young mother who had neither special training nor available schools, but who believed so strongly that a half-loaf was better than no bread that she came very near to making a three-quarters loaf out of her limited material. The work lays no claim to being professional, and such groups should not be called nursery schools or kindergartens, both these forms of education demanding a specialized type of thorough preparation for their teachers, but it is hoped that readers of this article will be convinced that even our "amateur" experiment may be so rich in value as to be well worth trying. It was certainly a privilege to sponsor so eager an effort towards wiser motherhood and happier childhood.—MARY CHAPLIN SHUTE, *Kindergarten Education, Teachers College of the City of Boston.*

WE LIVE in a preparatory school community, three and a half miles out of a small town, and there are a number of us, faculty wives, with small children. The problem of pre-school, nursery school, and kindergarten education was before us last fall, with three four-year olds and three two-year olds to consider. We all felt that the children would benefit by supervised group work and play, but the town boasted no nursery school for the two-year olds, and the difficulties of transportation put the existing schools for children out of the question for the others. The results during the eight months that we have done this have been more satisfactory than we had dared to hope, though there have been moments of confusion and discouragement, as well.

In preparation, we visited kindergar-

tens and nursery schools, talked with and asked questions of a kindergartner of many years' experience, and read all the books that we could lay hands on. We each planned to take our turn in our own nursery one morning a week with the six youngsters. Our preparations consisted chiefly in making sure that we had a low table and a few simple occupations and toys. Then, full of hope, we began.

Our purpose was not to teach set lessons or skill in handwork, but to give the group a chance to learn cooperation, neatness, independence, and the valuable lessons of give and take afforded by playing with children of the same age. At first, it seemed as if there were arguments and "fisticuffs" a great deal of the time, but little by little the children came to perceive that they must respect the rights of others, if only for the sake of having their own respected later. They

learned to take turns with the favorite toys, and now we very seldom have disputes—my own two “scrap” much more out of school than all six do in class. We tried to make it a rule not to let them take out one toy or kind of material without putting away what they were using before, and they were to clear up whatever disorder they made. There has been some improvement in neatness though not so marked as in cooperation. In independence, such as in putting on or taking off wraps or putting toys away, there is a great gain. The force of public opinion is a great factor in this, for it is considered babyish to ask for much help, and the ones who at first did not know how to do things for themselves, have wanted to learn. Public opinion also helped to bring into line one unruly, undisciplined child. At first, he always wanted to go off in the opposite direction when we were walking, and was generally rebellious, but in time he felt the weight of the disapproval of his peers, and he has become quite well-behaved.

The reactions of the two age-groups have been different and marked. The four-year-olds show much more constructive interest in the work, more concentration, and a sense of the dramatic, or rather an impulse to dramatize everything. The two-year-olds, especially at first, preferred to play quietly alone or explore the whole nursery, investigating everything by touching and moving it. With the older ones, we have expected and insisted upon a longer period of attention to one thing, and they have readily given it.

The reactions of individual children have been especially striking. I have mentioned the discipline accomplished for Paul by public opinion. My own

Anne, a very excitable two-year-old, has also improved greatly this winter. She used to have violent attacks of temper and tantrums, which I seemed powerless to stop or to prevent, and I could not accomplish anything in teaching her to master herself. I had questioned sending her to nursery school, as she was younger by several months than any of the others, and I feared the effects of over-stimulation. Instead of making her more nervous, nursery school, combined with growing older, has helped her gain a great deal in calmness, poise, and control of her temper, and we have had no tantrums since last fall. The spirit of generosity to others, which we try to stress in school, Anne now interprets in her relations with her baby sister, even when she forgets it with her contemporaries. Philip, one of the four-year-olds, had never played with other children and had had everything done for him by grown-ups. He would not join in things at all at first, but gradually he tried to, till now there is no sign of that “unsocial” trait. His hands are not as strong as some of the others, but he wants to help himself as much as they, and is manfully trying to catch up to the more skilful ones.

The daily program occupies two hours, one in the house, one out-of-doors. When the children arrive, they take off their coats and hats and come into the nursery, where all gather around the table to repeat our morning prayer:

Each new morning seems to say,
“There’s something happy on the way,
And God sends love to you.”

Then they play quiet games for twenty minutes or half an hour. By that time, signs of restlessness appear, and we start

the Victor or piano for such games as The Mulberry Bush or The Farmer in the Dell, or do some other lively thing. Next come crackers and milk, followed by a five-minute rest, lying on rugs on the floor while a story is told. Then all up to put on wraps to go out-of-doors for a walk, coasting, or games.

At first, the teacher had to say the prayer alone, but after a few days the older ones joined in and then the little ones, till at last one day Paul refused to repeat it, saying, "I've said it already, last night, when I went to bed." We have tried a number of quiet occupations and found the successful ones to include bead-stringing, blocks, pegs and peg-boards, pasting, paper chains, mosaics, crayons, stencils, sewing cards, and magic pictures. Scissors would do for the older ones, but are not safe for the others; plasticine proves too sticky, and many of the other kindergarten supplies are too advanced. When the time for strenuous activity comes, the piano and Victor make splendid leaders in such games as London Bridge, The Mulberry Bush, Miss Jennie Jones, The Farmer in the Dell, etc. Marching, clapping, skipping to music, simple dancing, and calisthenics work out well also.

It seems rash to entrust a pitcher of milk to a two-year-old, but the spills have been few and the satisfaction in drinking milk you have poured yourself, is very great. In telling stories, the old favorites have to be repeated again and again—Red Riding Hood, The Three Bears, Henny Penny, The Three Pigs, and the familiar nursery rhymes. Interspersed with them have come stories appropriate to the seasons and festivals, and tales of wonderful things in the world about us. We have tried to make the holidays mean some-

thing definite to the children, and to point out to them the wonders of nature, and their own place in the world. How much of this they really comprehend, is, of course, a matter of conjecture, but at least they begin to feel their dependence on the community and their responsibility toward it.

Of course, dressing six lively wrigglers in the layers of clothes necessary for a new England winter, was a strenuous piece of work, but they all tried to learn to help, and now can do alone all but hard buttons and tight rubbers. When we need only a sweater apiece, we can get out-of-doors much sooner. The ideal occupation in warm weather was the sand-box, and coasting was equally popular when we had snow. Visits to the barn, the rabbit hutch, and the woods are delightful; and hammocks, railings, and trellises are good substitutes for "jungle gyms" and other apparatus. In the spring, it is a great source of enjoyment to watch the flowers and leaves and birds and other signs of the season as they appear. Games are good out-of-doors, too—hide and seek, tag, puss in the corner, follow the leader, ring around a rosie, and Jack be nimble.

If there are other groups of mothers faced with our problems, I should certainly advise them to try a plan similar to ours, for I am sure they will find it has many advantages. But from our experience, let me add a few warnings.

1. Choose the mothers carefully; they must agree, in the main, as to theories of bringing up children, and each must be ready and willing to assume her fair share of responsibility toward making the class a success.

2. Do not have too many children; six is a maximum, and five is much simpler.

3. Have children as nearly the same age as possible.

4. Above all, do not be discouraged if it all seems like chaos in the beginning. We all were disheartened after our first few efforts. No one wanted to confess how the confusion exhausted her, because each thought, "It must be my fault that it is so bad here. I must do better and not admit that I am beaten."

But soon both mothers and children learned a great deal and gradually everything became smoother. Now it is all comparatively easy and we have completely lost that baffled and helpless feeling we had at first. I think all of us now consider that the experiment has been full of good results, and we are ready to continue it another year and to advise others to try a class like ours.

COMING CONVENTIONS

The American Home Economics Association will hold its twentieth annual meeting at Asheville, North Carolina, June 21 to 24, 1927, with the Battery Park Hotel as Headquarters. An unusual feature of the program will be the opening "annual progress meeting" at which representatives of the various sections of the Association (such as food and nutrition, textiles and clothing, and homemaking) will give brief, vivid summaries of the year's scientific progress in their respective subjects.

The Department of Kindergarten-Primary Education of the National Education Association will meet on July fifth and sixth in Seattle, Washington. The theme of the July fifth session is *The Nursery-Kindergarten-Primary Span*. The speakers are Frank E. Willard, Helen Christiansen, Mary Dabney Davis, and Etta Tessmer. The July sixth program is concerned with *Outgrowth of Unified Activity Program for Young Children*. The speakers are J. L. Meriam, Helen Reynolds, Mildred Miller, and Mary Anne Wells. The annual kindergarten-primary luncheon will be held on Thursday, July seventh.

The World Federation of Education Associations meeting in Toronto, Canada, August seventh to twelfth, will be well attended by representatives of the International Kindergarten Union. If you plan to go, kindly notify the headquarters office of the International Kindergarten Union. Julia Wade Abbott announces that a splendid program for the nursery, kindergarten, and preschool section is under way.

National Council of Primary Education

FRANCES JENKINS, EDITOR

Editor's Notes

A HIGHSTRUNG nervous child was walking along the street with a sympathetic grown-up. As they passed a pale, fragile youngster, he pointed him out saying, "I feel so sorry for him, he's so weak. But of course he always gets A in conduct." One can but wonder whether "A in conduct" indicates passivity. Is the active youngster too often penalized for his natural joyous activity?

A request comes for help in formulating report card captions which shall give parents and teachers a wider interpretation of that obedience which is at the foundation of social control. We shall be glad to receive criticisms of the following questions which are submitted in response to that call.

1. Is he learning to obey when demands are consistent and thoughtful?
2. Does he obey promptly signals requiring immediate action?

3. Does he trust parents and teachers so that he will respond promptly in emergencies?
4. Does he realize that all must obey laws of health, laws of safety, and laws of honesty?
Of what other general laws is he aware?
5. Is he developing self-direction and self-control?

Vacation time is approaching and thousands of children will soon be speeding away on trips with their parents. Those who travel by automobile are likely to be most comfortable. But we have all seen the difficulties which arise when children make long railroad journeys. Can we as teachers make a contribution here? Might we suggest tools and materials easily carried which would give happy employment on the train? Could we suggest new books which might be purchased as the grown-up provides himself with reading material? What uses of magazines and newspapers are new for the children?

Hughes Mearns and Creative Work¹

Inspiration for a more sympathetic treatment of children's language work came from a talk by Hughes Mearns, author of *Creative Youth*. Mr. Mearns believes that the language of childhood needs study and interpretation. He has faith that a creative vein will often be found if right conditions are presented. He calls attention to the fact that the more natural rhythm of English speech is used by the young child, and that the old stereotyped forms are very far removed from his natural usage. In his own expression we need to find those elements of force and beauty which express his meanings.

In illustration of his points Mr. Mearns presented a number of poems which will shortly appear in a volume called *Singing Youth* by Mable Mountseer, about to be published by Harpers. This hymn of thanksgiving was worked out by a third grade class on the plan frequently called cooperative composition. As Mr. Mearns said, "the teacher stood before the class as a human being rather than as a teacher." Very quietly she spoke to the children of the season of thanksgiving, then approaching, and asked what they had to be thankful for. The whole atmosphere of the room was thoughtful and quiet. One after another the children gave their suggestions. These were written upon the board in her own type of shorthand or abbreviation by the teacher. When the children had finished they were excused for recess and the teacher copied the material written. At a later time the sentences were given to the children with the sug-

gestion that they be arranged in a pleasing order. The result was the hymn.

A HYMN OF THANKSGIVING

We give thanks for the beautiful country that lies around us.
 We give thanks for the grains and vegetable and fruits prepared for us. And we give thanks for the growing trees and flowers about us.
 We give thanks for the rain that falls and the sun that shines down upon us.
 We thank God for the mountains that tower above us and for the rocks that give us shelter and give us beauty.
 We give thanks for the sky above us and the earth below us and the birds that fly between earth and sky.
 We give thanks for the cloth to make sails and the wood to make boats that sail on the waters.
 We give thanks for the little streams that flow.
 We give thanks for the tide that rises and lets us go out in our boats.
 We give thanks for the sea with fishes in it.
 We thank God for all the living creatures on the earth.
 We give thanks for the fire that warms us.
 We give thanks for warm clothes and beds and houses to live in.
 We give thanks for schools to learn in.
 We give thanks for the beauty and love all around us.
 We give thanks for all the things that the Lord has set upon the earth.

Mr. Mearns thinks that mothers have long realized the value of children's spontaneous attempts at beautiful language. He says that the mother's name rather than Hilda Conkling's should appear on the book of poems and the title should suggest that the mother copied the poems as the child created them. The following poems are both of that type, in each case the mother having written down what the child said.

¹ A report of Mr. Mearns' talk before the National Council of Primary Education, Dallas, Texas, March 2, 1927.

Drowsyheads is the work of a little five-year-old. She expresses as no one else has done the complete exhaustion which a child feels following a day of hearty play. She gives an interesting interpretation of a child's thoughts of the sky. In her term "spider-vines" she coins a charming expression.

DROWSYHEADS

I'm tired—
Tired as the lazy stones
That are always sitting down,
Most tired as the sky
That stays up all night and day
Whether it's early with spider-vines
Or late with frogs singing.

GERTRUDE LOUISE CHENEY (age 5).

In *Everything is Something Else* we have a charm which is the result of a series of accretions. As a four-year-old the youngster began his versification. As time went on he added to it. At nine the following result had been achieved.

EVERYTHING IS SOMETHING ELSE

O, the towel and the bath,
And the bath and the soap,
And the soap was the fat,
And the fat was the pig,
And the pig was the bran,

And the bran makes sausages
And God makes man.

E. WYNDHAM TENNANT (age 4-9).

The point of view expressed in *A Young Darkey in the Spring* is unusual. We have here an attempt of a twelve-year-old not only at a humorous interpretation of nature but also in the use of dialect which is accomplished in excellent fashion.

A YOUNG DARKEY IN THE SPRING

A chick'dee, settin' on de branch ovah dere'
Sassily caakin' 'is head,
Thinks he's smaart, jes kase he cun sing
Chick-a-dee, chick-a-dee ding.

All of de odder early burds
What am here in de spring
Lisse im, boldly scornin' him.
Dey all know he stuck on hisself
Staid ob priasin' de spring.

HELEN ROEHLING (age 12).

Mr. Mearns in his schoolroom procedure has helped children to get the creative point of view, recognizing that artistry in writing depends largely upon a natural, wholesome atmosphere. To awaken and sustain this creative impulse is undoubtedly a challenge to the artist teacher.

In gold upon the mansion of the sky
The stars write this last word for us below:
"The good deeds of kind hearts will never die;
All else will go
With the spent candle and the butterfly."

Richard LeGallienne.

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Executive Secretary and Assistant Treasurer, LUVERNE CRABTREE, Washington, D. C.

The Record Breaking Convention in New Haven

The 34th Annual Meeting of the International Kindergarten Union held in New Haven April 25th to 28th brought together delegates from twenty-six states. One delegate came from far away Moscow, Russia intent upon gaining, from her American colleagues, insight and information about the education of little children. The registration passed the 1100 mark. Massachusetts received the banner for having the largest attendance at the convention.

The program offered was varied and stimulating. Under the skilful leadership of the president, Alice Temple, a record was again established of convention meetings beginning and ending on scheduled time.

A happy feature of the convention was the attendance of eleven of the nineteen ex-presidents of the organization who brought words of cheer and inspiration to the delegates.

In gracious hospitality New Haven opened wide the doors of her educational institutions. The many teachers who visited the kindergartens, the primary grades, and the Yale Psycho-Clinic found much to interest and to aid them in their work at home.

The following brief summary of high spots on the program is given with the assurance that CHILDHOOD EDUCATION will publish during the next few months many of the addresses in their entirety.

Great stress was placed upon the need of providing for the young child the best that the teaching profession has to offer. Training schools must give the teacher of the lower grades a broad, rich training.

The value of the kindergartner as a community worker was also developed. Closely allied to this thought was that presented by Dr. Campbell and Dr. Gesell of the necessity for enlarging the influence of the school through the wise cooperation of parents and teachers. Methods of how this may be accomplished were outlined.

From the problem of teacher training we turned to that of curriculum making. The value and necessity of continuous growth through the curriculum was stressed and the need of guiding the child in relation to his own rate of progress and to his own individual difficulties was emphasized. A high note was sounded when attention was called to the necessity for curriculum makers to recognize not only the child's interests and

activities but the goal toward which he is to be guided. "What are the big meanings of life which the child must experience and comprehend?" Dr. Rugg suggested for a slogan "Maximum growth at Minimum Expense." This would surely indicate the need of more careful study and evaluation of experiences provided for the children in these lower grades.

Creative expression through rhythm, drama, art, and language was dealt with by experts in the varied fields of expression. The joy of the teaching profession was most vitally felt at this meeting and the inspiration of the little child was most vividly present as we listened to these accounts of his growth in self expression.

The other side of the picture was the presentation of how instruction in the school skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic may be developed in close connection with the child's activities and in such a way that his own interests will furnish the drive for

the mastery of these necessary tools of learning.

Working committees reported progress upon such studies as the following: Present Status of Kindergarten-Primary Unification, Vocabulary Study of Child in Home, Nursery Schools in the United States, etc. The Committee on Equipment and Supplies reported the completion of a list of equipment and supplies for nursery school, kindergarten, and first three grades of the primary school. This list will be issued as an International Kindergarten Union bulletin.

The convention closed with a symposium dinner presided over by Lucy Wheelock.

To New Haven we extend our heartfelt thanks for her hospitality and to Grand Rapids we pledge our support and joyous anticipation of a happy reunion in her midst in 1928.

MARGARET C. HOLMES,
*Recording Secretary, International
Kindergarten Union.*

Announcement of Winners in Childhood Education Story Contest¹

The Williams & Wilkins Company awarded the following prizes, the winners of which were announced by Catharine R. Watkins, chairman of the Jury Committee on the Story Contest, at the New Haven convention:

FIRST PRIZE—FIFTY DOLLARS

Bobbie Grasshopper-Green, Marjorie Herford, Seattle, Washington.

SECOND PRIZE—TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS

Lucy and the Fairies, Margaret Brearley, New York City.

¹ Stories not listed may be secured by sending postage to the headquarters office.

THIRD PRIZE—TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS

The Child Who Grew Four Ways, Dorothy Bushnell, Newton, Massachusetts.

HONORABLE MENTION

A Place for Everything, Edwina Fallis, Denver, Colorado.

Grumpy, Mildred E. Bennett, Eagle Rock, California.

The Clock Maker, Edna M. Shaw, Buffalo, New York.

A Robins' Nest, Minnie Loenholdt, St. Paul, Minnesota.

Who's Who in Childhood Education

William C. Bagley as speaker, writer, and teacher needs no introduction to readers of *Childhood Education*. Dr. Bagley was professor of education at the University of Illinois, 1908-1917, and since that time has served at Teachers College, Columbia University. Among his publications are *An Introduction to Teaching* (with J. A. H. Keith) *Determinism in Education*. During the War he edited the *National School Service* and from 1920-1925 the *Journal of the National Education Association*.

Marjorie Herford, whose *Bobbie Grasshopper-Green* won first prize in the Childhood Education story contest, is a kindergarten teacher in Seattle, Washington. Miss Herford first told her grasshopper story to the children of the cotton mill districts when she was teaching in Alabama. She has told the story many many times since then adding, with the children's help, adventures appropriate to the season and occasion.

W. F. Kennedy is director of the platoon schools of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and associate professor at the University of Pittsburgh. Before his present connection with the platoon schools Mr. Kennedy was principal of the Crescent School, the Morse School, and the McKelvy School of Pittsburgh. He is a contributor to the *Pennsylvania School Journal*; *School of Education Journal*, University of Pittsburgh; *National*

Platoon Magazine, and the *National Conference of Social Work*.

H. B. Wilson has been superintending during practically his entire educational career. Since 1897 he has served as superintendent of schools of Salem, Indiana; Franklin, Indiana; Decatur, Illinois; Topeka, Kansas; and is now superintendent of schools of Berkeley, California. Among his publications are *Modern Methods in Teaching*, *Modern School Readers*, and *Character Education Readers*.

Hughes Mearns' name has become almost a synonym for Creative Expression, or perhaps it is Creative Expression which has become a synonym for Hughes Mearns. Certainly no one has done more than Mr. Mearns for the promotion of the cause of the creative. Mr. Mearns is associated now with the Lincoln School of Teachers College. He is the author of *Richard Richard*, *The Vinegar Saint*, *I Ride in My Coach*, and *Creative Youth*.

Vera Fediaevsky will have much to contribute to kindergarten education in Russia on her return after her short stay in this country. She came to America in order to attend the New Haven convention of the International Kindergarten Union and has also visited schools in New York and the Bureau of Education and headquarters of the International Kindergarten Union in Washington, D. C.

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

Equipment and Supplies for Nursery, Kindergarten, and Primary Grades, a new publication of the International Kindergarten Union, will be on the market about the middle of June. The price of the pamphlet is 35¢ a single copy, in lots of fifty or more—30¢ a copy.

Knowing the demand for such material in summer schools, the I. K. U. Committee on Equipment and Supplies which prepared the pamphlet has expended special effort to have it ready in time for summer sessions. Teacher training institutions, supervisors, and classroom teachers will be glad to have this valuable material in form for their use. For full particulars communicate with the headquarters office of the Union.

From the Foreign Field

Summer Kindergartens in Russian Villages

VERA FEDIAEVSKY

Moscow, Russia

The question of organizing kindergartens in villages arose for the first time at the third All Russian Preschool Congress in 1924. This is a new task and a very urgent one. It is a part of the whole work among the peasant population in connection with the policy of the Soviet government "turn your face to the country side."

The creation of permanent village kindergartens is the hoped for result. But only a few permanent kindergartens have been formed because of the lack of means and of a sufficient number of teachers trained to the work.

By the first of June 1925 there were only eighty-seven village kindergartens in R. S. F. S. R.

As long as the network of kindergartens is insufficient, temporary playgrounds for preschool children have been established in villages. These playgrounds are summer kindergartens. In the summer of 1925 there were 1500 playgrounds for 75,000 children. And by the summer of 1926 there were 3000 playgrounds for 150,000 children. Most of these are in villages. These figures are taken from the report of the director of the Preschool Department of the Commissariat of Popular Education.

If the work of a playground was successful pains are taken to have it also the following summer or if it is possible to transform it into a permanent winter kindergarten. In this way the organization of a playground is a step towards the establishment of a kindergarten.

The need of kindergartens and playgrounds in villages is very great, especially in harvest time when all the adult popula-

tion is in the fields and the children of preschool age remain nearly without supervision. Such a condition of things is fraught with serious danger both for the children themselves and for the village because of fire and accidents. Village mothers stand in great need of help especially in this respect at this season. At the same time it is most essential to make the best use of the summer for the children's health.

The principles of preschool work are certainly the same in town kindergartens as in village ones.¹ But the pedagogical work as well as that of organization changes in connection with diversity of surroundings.

THE WORK WITH THE POPULATION

The work with the population was with different public organizations and with the unorganized mass, which includes parents. The kindergarten teachers were heavily handicapped: they had to face material difficulties; they were distrusted by the population; the work itself was long and tedious. But the enthusiasm and energy of the kindergartners surmounted all obstacles. In many cases the playground workers were students of universities and pedagogical technicums.

The centre usually gave a salary only to kindergartners. All the rest had to be obtained from local resources. Sometimes the playground was subsidized by the cantonal executive Committee or the cooperative societies or other organizations. There were cases when a playground was opened

¹ *The Kindergarten in Russia*, Childhood Education, September and October, 1926.

with only 9 roubles (\$4.50) ready money and during the summer resources were found and the sum of its expenditure arose to 700 roubles (\$350). But the budget of some playgrounds attained 1200 roubles and more.

The kindergartners sought out for means everywhere. They would come for instance to a dramatic society. The latter would consent to share in the expenses of the playground on condition that the kindergarten teachers should play on their stage. A co-operative store sometimes gives money, sometimes material for aprons, pounds of nails, beads, or wooden and pastboard boxes of various sizes.

The kindergarten teachers tried to draw all the village organizations into the work. They asked school teachers to cooperate. The latter sometimes worked shoulder to shoulder but sometimes they remained indifferent not understanding the importance of preschool work. Some members of the Junior Communistic Union (Komsomol) and some redscouts (pioneers) sometimes did certain jobs: for instance, they made fences around playgrounds. A playground council was organized. Its members were representatives from: the cantonal executive committee, the village council, the women's organization, the communistic party, the committee of mutual assistance, the cooperative store, etc.

The peasant population in places, where the playground was organized for the first time, was inclined to be suspicious and distrusting of it. The peasants were afraid to send their children to it; they thought the children would without fail be turned into communists and taken away to Moscow. Or they would fear that taxes would be increased. Others thought that the playground would be supported by the state exclusively and that it would include all village children and especially all those of nursery age. They were disappointed by the fact that they must share in maintaining the playground and that it was to be mainly for the use of children of preschool age.

The peasants had to be persuaded at meetings. But it was very difficult to call meetings together at times of field work.

The kindergartners called at houses and talked with mothers principally. They endeavored to persuade them to help in the organization of the playground. At first they met with failure. During the first days peasants in some villages were so ill disposed that they would not sell milk and eggs for the use of the kindergartners themselves. Soon however they began not only to sell but to give products free for the playground, i.e., bread, milk, potatoes, onions, and other things. They also paid some money. The equipment of the playground was also due to the peasant women: one lent a frying-pan for the summer, another a pitcher, flueplates were used sometimes as lids for pans.

The pedagogical work also was carried on not without a struggle. The mothers were against little children working, though at the same time they overtaxed the strength of eight and nine year old children by making nurses of them for the little ones. Mothers would fear that the children would be hungry if they ate only at fixed hours.

What were the kindergarten teachers to do? They tried to acquaint the mothers with the life of the playground. Therefore they were invited to see the playground or it was proposed that they help with some job.

The teachers talked to the peasants; they entered in houses to measure the temperature of sick children. They convoked the parents' meetings. They instituted entertainments on the care to be taken of the child at home, on children's health, on the harm done to children by beating them. The women saw that their children were fed on the playground, that they became cleaner and healthier, that they worked with pleasure, and that care was taken of them. The mothers appreciated not only the fact that they had more free time, but they also appreciated the pedagogical work of the teachers.



The exhibition of children's work, the festivals on the playground served also as a propaganda of preschool work. The distrust shown at the outset by the peasants was overcome. At the end of the summer the mothers invited kindergartners to their houses, entertained them, expressed their gratitude. At the closing of the playgrounds the parents expressed their desire to have a playground again on the following summer. Sometimes immediately after the playground had been closed a committee was organized for the seeking out of means for a future playground. In some cases it was possible to transform the playground into a winter kindergarten. In villages where a permanent kindergarten already existed some playgrounds usually sprang up around it. Some playgrounds were established by town kindergartens, which went into the country in summer. Thus did the network of playgrounds spread.

THE WORK WITH THE CHILDREN

The peculiarities of a peasant child must be studied and the kindergarten's work in villages must be based on the results of this study. But even now we are acquainted with some of the features of its personality. The peasant child differs from the town child. It is more reserved and less excitable than a town child. It is not so capricious. It is accustomed to work. But often it is annoyed by the work because it is above its strength. The child and its parents also have many superstitions. The parents go to quacks. The children stop one another from doing different things, "Do not catch the butterfly, do not touch the grasshopper, or your mother will die." The child is afraid to be the last to get out from the river—the watergoblin will take it. Children's games reflect their environment: they play at funerals, weddings, drunkenness.

The children's health was, unfortunately, not good for the most part. There were many cases of cacochymy and of skin disease. This was owing not so much to

poverty, as to unhygienical conditions of life. Children often had not the habit of washing at home. They were always too much muffled up. Usually they did not eat at home at fixed hours but generally ran about all day long with a piece of bread or a cucumber in their hands. The above mentioned features of village life were all taken into consideration by those who carried on the pedagogical work. Care for the child's health stood foremost. A strict regime was fixed for the day. The children were usually fed three or four times a day. Efforts were made to accustom the children to cultured habits. Their heavy garments were replaced by combinations and bathing-trousers.

The children were wiped with cold water and bathed. Sun baths were introduced into use. In the middle of the day a time of rest from one to two hours was instituted. But the oldest children, of seven and eight years, protested against putting them to bed and sometimes the teachers had to give it up. Occasionally a physician would be at the head of all the sanitary work of the playground. But at the opening and closing he was constantly present, he always examined the children, took their measurements and at the closing made notes of the results attained in regard to health.

The children were trained by work and play. The teachers tried to make the usual peasant labor attractive. Therefore a kitchen-garden was attached to the playground. There arose, for instance, a project for struggling against the natural enemies of plants. The children observed plants which had been injured and healthy ones. The playground teachers directed this struggle. This work made a very general appeal to parents. Sometimes mothers, who at the beginning protested against children's work and duties, began after some time to understand its pedagogical value.

The widening of the children's mental horizon was also one of the aims of the playground. Village children sometimes knew nothing except their own village.



Trips were made into the woods, to the banks of the river, into the fields. Field work was observed. Modern agricultural machines were especially demonstrated. The postoffice, the brick-*kuin* in the neighborhood, the railway-station, the co-operative store, the carpenter's, joiner's, shoe-maker's workshops were visited. These excursions enriched the children's minds and were reflected in their free dramatization.

The playground's children were in contact with pioneers (red-scouts). The organization of the village council and of the cantonal executive committee was explained to the children. There were festivals on the international day of cooperation and on the international children's week.

Although the village children were surrounded by nature they very often paid no heed to it. Therefore the teachers tried to attract their attention to the phenomena of nature and their explanation and to combat the superstitions, so common among peasants.

Children remain on the playground ten hours on the average. But some playgrounds were open as much as eighteen hours a day. Sometimes parents brought children to the playground at two o'clock in the morning when they were going to the fields or to the mowing and took them home at ten o'clock in the evening. Thus it may be said that the children not only visited the playground but lived on it.

There were even some cases, when children remained on the playground for the night (every playground had a building attached). These were children from other villages (the playground was often for several villages). At such times the kindergartners remained on duty by turns for the night.

ATTAINMENTS

The attainments resulting from the playground life for the children were considerable. They increased in strength and weight. The children acquired cultured hygienic habits and transferred them to their

homes. They continued at home to wash their hands before meals, to clean their teeth, to wash their feet before bed time. The children began to dress in lighter garments and to eat at fixed hours and not at all times. Not only did the children become cleaner but they also required more cleanliness of their parents. For instance a little baby in its mother's arm would let a piece of bread fall, the mother would pick up the dirty piece and give it to the baby, but its brother, who visited the playground would stop her. Children in the family insisted on having separate towels and separate bowls—in peasant families it is often the custom that all should eat from one dish. The children often say to their mothers "wash my towel well, it is for the playground." The children become less distrustful, their intellectual circle widens, they become more organized and learn to cooperate in play and work.

On the other hand the playground not only gave the mothers more freedom during the hard field work, but it also exerted an influence on them. They learned to trust it. The mothers saw that it was possible to bring up children in a different way from theirs, hygienically and pedagogically. Besides they grew to understand that their help as well in a material sense as in that of collaboration was indispensable for the organization of playgrounds. It was noted that in places, where there were playgrounds, the population desired to have them again or to have a permanent kindergarten. Thus we see that the playground is a centre of culture for the population.

In some playgrounds in addition to children of kindergarten age (in Russia this is the age from three to seven years) groups of nursery age were also admitted.

It was very seldom that a playground and a crèche for nursery children were to be found in a village simultaneously.

The need of supervision for the smallest children, for babies and toddlers during the season of field work is intense and is one of the problems to be solved in the future.

The Reading Table

Among the Magazines

The page conducted in the NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW by Simeon Strunsky and called "About Books, More or Less" is devoted in the issue of April third to the topic *The Child Comes Back*. Mr. Strunsky, taking as his text a recent book on the relationship of fathers and sons by Dr. Drury has some rather striking things to say of schools and their attitude toward the home. "Educators are now insisting that parents assume a good measure of the authority—and responsibility—hitherto delegated to the schoolmaster." "The experts of pedagogy are sending out an S O S to the amateurs in the home." Mr. Strunsky finds this an amazing situation and feels it would be regarded as a revolution against our educational institutions, save that it is being fostered by the educators themselves. Yet he finds the parents and the home not entirely to blame for the fault which they are now urged to correct, for he says, "One big reason why the home has laid down on its job, why it has passed the buck to the schoolmaster and the expert and the outsider in general, is that for years the home has been encouraged, persuaded, commanded to do so—by the professionals. . . . Some allowance, then, should be made for a parentage which has surrendered its traditional duties, not in selfishness but in humility, in the desire to let the child have what is best for him." Now however, Mr. Strunsky finds a complete reversal of attitude. He tells us "The New York State Crime Commission the other day questioned (doesn't it make a nice verb?) 3000 citizens on the causes of crime. The teachers so quizzed gave second place among a dozen causes of crime to lack of home supervision. The 'educators'—how

distinguished from the teachers I do not know—gave first place to lack of home supervision. Tens of thousands of unhappy teachers in their daily routine are asking of tens of thousands of unhappy mothers, 'What can I do without your help?' So this is the situation: The school is now confessing that in respect to the chief end of education, the building of character, the school can do very little. The building of character, that is to say, of the individual, must be carried on at home." Mr. Strunsky wonders what will be the answer from parents to this demand of the experts, and cleverly parodying Shylock suggests for them this—"Signor Neurosociologue, you expressed grave doubts, on Wednesday last, concerning my fitness to supervise the pneumovascular development of my child; on such a day you hinted that I was only stuffing the little one with destructive Oedipus complexes; another time you insisted that mother love was nonsense when the indicated course of action was obviously tonsilectomy; and all along you have maintained that I was much better engaged in playing auction or banging the typewriter than in bringing up my child. Now you come and say, 'Take the child and build up his character; we have tried and somehow the results refuse to click' What should I say to you? Should I not say, 'Hath a mother the necessary acquaintance with dear old Mendel's three dominants and two recessives to build her child's character?—and so on.'" However he does not believe that parents will avail themselves of this fine opportunity, but will rather rejoice that from science and the professionals has come affirmation of the feeling they have always had "That perhaps parents after

all are not entirely disqualified by the fact of parentage to look after their children." In his full and interesting discussion, Mr. Strunsky does not include the strong demand made today upon parents, not alone that they should assume responsibility for the training of their own children, but that they themselves shall train themselves to do this thing. The movement for the education of parents, now so general must flourish in the same degree to which demands are made upon them for responsibility. They must not so much, simply as parents, assume duties which have been considered as belonging to experts—they must themselves become experts.

The NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW in its spring number has something to say on this same topic, in its department of Affairs of the World, with the title *The Flickering of Flaming Youth*. It tells of the appeals that are being made to teachers to assume responsibility for moral instruction, discipline, and guidance of the children. At a recent convention of educators in Oregon a large part of the program was devoted to urging this duty upon the teachers. This is characterized in this editorial as "futile labblings" and Henry Suzzallo is quoted in refutation as follows, "the school is an institution preeminently devised to deal with intellectual things. The average critic of our schools expects them to do things they were never designed to do." The article concludes " 'Flaming Youth' may be admirable, if the flame be constant, luminous, and serene. But if it is to be kept from flickering and flaring and consuming itself in ruin, the hand that steadies it should be the hand that lighted it. Pedagogics, sociology, penology, and all the rest of the social sciences can never contrive nor discover a substitute for parental authority and domestic influence." We will hardly quarrel with this belief though we may at the same time feel equally confident that the social sciences may do much to improve the

quality of these same parental relationships and home environment.

The same journal has an article by Charles A. Richmond, president of Union College on *Present Educational Discontents* which, while devoted largely to the field of higher education, has some wisdom for all educators. He tells us, "Never has there been so much criticism of education and never has it been so savage." He goes on to say, "And no wonder; for next to keeping alive, education is the most important thing in life, not only because it touches all life but from the very size of it. Of all the big businesses in this land of big business, education is the biggest. Not so far from one-quarter of our one hundred and seventeen millions are either going to school or teaching school. The other three-quarters pay for it, and they are the critics; often unintelligent, sometimes unjust, occasionally helpful, but always interested." One might mention here that not all the critics are outside the fold of those engaged in education. Some of the most severe criticism comes from the ranks. He tells us "The last generation has seen changes in education more marked than any within the memory of the living." And he thinks, "In primary education these changes have been altogether to the good." Most of the rest of the article is devoted to a consideration of what changes have been made in secondary education and, that being the author's special field, of showing how they have not all been good. One wonders if his certainty that the changes in the primary field have been all good is based on comprehensive knowledge of them, or are accepted as good simply because this is not his field.

Dr. Richmond feels that the accent on vocational education of our time is certainly not "altogether to the good." This lies rather outside the interests of the primary field, but he makes an alluring paraphrase we will quote. "In our day our main purpose was to get an education. We had at heart some vague notion of what the poet

meant when he said, 'My mind to me a kingdom is.' Now it is very practical prose, or if turned into free verse it would read:

'My mind to me an income is
And it is nothing more.' "

The conclusion of the article is inspiring—"Behind and under every system is a philosophy. In our education most thoughtful men will agree that we have allowed too much influence to the material, not to say the commercial. Our appeal must be set higher. . . . When we think of ourselves as spiritual beings, made in God's image, immortal souls with an eternal destiny, whatever may be wrong in our orientation will be by way of correction."

And in comment on the demand for self-expression of our time he has this to say. "In an age of premature self-expression, where so much green fruit is brought to market and, strange to say, actually marketed, we remember with relief that there are many who have welcomed the advice of Chrysostom, 'Depart from the highway and transplant thyself in some enclosed ground, for it is hard for a tree that stands by the wayside to keep her fruit until it be ripe.'"

In the April number of *CURRENT HISTORY* John H. Butler of State Teachers College, San Francisco discusses *Our Spendthrift Schools*." Starting with the question "Is public education costing too much?" this subject is dealt with in detail. The article tells us that all over the country there is a great discussion of the mounting cost of education—the magnificent modern palaces which are our new schools, their furniture and equipment, the expensive things that are taught, the automobiles which carry the children to the consolidated schools, and so on, all the new things which have been added to the school since the days of our traditional little red school house, are being viewed with alarm by a great many people, and some communities feel the financial burden is too great to be borne.

Not only has there been much discussion of these things—there has been actual reaction against them. Dr. Butler quotes Henry Pritchett of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, as one who has made a "slashing indictment against extravagance, declaring that millions were being wasted on 'fads and frills.'" His particular grievance seems to have been that many were being educated who should be in industry. Unfortunately Dr. Pritchett's indictment resulted in serious retrenchment in many places. Dr. Butler examines it in detail with figures on the cost of education which are now available to determine "what we pay for education on the basis of what we earn. He does find first of all that in the decade between 1910 and 1920 there was a 140 per cent rise in the cost of our public education. But this superficial comparison means nothing. What must be considered is the purchasing power of the dollar and the comparison of this expenditure with other governmental expenditures. This shows an increase of 270 per cent so that 140 per cent for education "instead of an abnormal rise shows an abnormal fall." As these expenditures include war this is perhaps not a valid comparison so he next compares the largest item of government expenditures next to education that of highway construction. This shows an increase of 163 per cent—appreciably more than the increase for education. A still better comparison is to find out what per cent of the national income is being spent for education. Here are very illuminating and indeed surprising statistics. "In 1919 we were spending 1.6 per cent of our national income for education. After ten years had passed, after our schools had grown so tremendously, as will be shown later on, education was taking but 1.7 per cent of the national income. What is more to the point, at the present time it has fallen back again to the old figure—1.6 per cent."

He goes on to discuss the type of education which is being given children today and

giving facts to bear out his conclusion says that "spelling is far more efficiently taught now than it was in the old days, and so are reading, writing, and arithmetic. The three precious R's have been mastered far better by the modern children than they were by the boys and girls of a generation or two ago. Moreover they have been mastered at a far earlier age." He discusses at some length the valuable additions which have been made to the curriculum. Of one of these he has this to say. "Another of these fads is the supervision of children in the schools by doctors, dentists, and nurses." Of this work he says, "Dangerous epidemics were nipped in the bud; millions of dollars, as well as many young lives were saved."

And lastly he discusses the training of teachers. Here is the point of vitality of the

schools, and we do not measure up to other countries. Great improvements are being made, but the country as a whole is well below the training regarded as minimum—two years beyond the high school. . . . His conclusion is "parents should study their schools themselves. The amount they are willing to pay for schools is an exact estimate of the value they place on education; an exact gage of their love for the welfare of their children. . . . So stands the case for the schools. The evidence seems to show that our educators have groped ahead pretty efficiently, considering all they have done for our children during the last few years. The marvel seems to be, not that they have spent so much, but that they have spent so little in doing all that they have done."—ELLA RUTH BOYCE.

Wins \$2,000 Prize with Sea Story

A sea story by a great-granddaughter of Commodore John Rodgers of the *U. S. S. Constitution* has won the prize of \$2,000 offered by Little, Brown & Company for the book most suitable for inclusion in their series, "The Beacon Hill Bookshelf for Boys and Girls." The winning story, "The Trade Wind," by Cornelia Meigs, of Keokuk, Iowa, has been chosen from nearly 400 manuscripts submitted in the contest, the publishers announced to-day.

"The Trade Wind" is the story of a boy in the romantic period just before the Revolution. Upon receiving an unexpected message from his father, who had never returned from a mysterious voyage, he ships with a sailing vessel as a supercargo, to continue his father's efforts in behalf of the colonists. The boy experiences pursuits by traitors and enemies, skirmishes with pirates, and fights with savages in the tropics.

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